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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 14 July 1994, at 6 p.m.

President : Mr. BUTLER (Australia)

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Coordination of United Nations activities related to HIV/AIDS

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The meeting was called to order at 6.25 p.m.

COORDINATION OF UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES RELATED TO HIV/AIDS (E/1994/71)

Dr. MERSON (Executive Director, WHO Global Programme on AIDS), speaking on behalf of the organizations sponsoring the joint and co-sponsored United Nations Programme on the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), namely, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO), said that the report before the Council (E/1994/71) was the product of a process of consultation initiated in response to resolution 1993/51 of the Economic and Social Council, endorsing World Health Assembly resolution WHA 46.37.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic, the end of which was still not in sight, was truly a global problem which affected all continents and all countries and required a unified response from the United Nations system. Although some health problems claimed a larger number of victims, HIV/AIDS was on the rise and selectively affected young adults, thus depriving children and the elderly of their care and support. Moreover, it had a social and economic impact out of all proportion to the number of persons infected, which it was estimated would reach 30 or 40 million by the year 2000.

There was now a double challenge: on the one hand, in countries where HIV had arrived early, there was a need to provide care for the growing number of people with AIDS, to address the economic and social consequences and to accelerate prevention efforts; on the other hand, in countries where HIV was a new phenomenon, it was essential to prevent the serious epidemics which had occurred elsewhere.

AIDS extended far beyond the health sector in that it required, among other things, a broad societal commitment to tackle the roots of HIV spread, such as migration, the subordination of women, illiteracy and poverty; community-based initiatives to encourage young people to adopt protective sexual practices; the involvement of women's organizations in teaching women to protect themselves from HIV; and the participation of the private sector in setting up AIDS prevention programmes in the workplace. It also required grass-roots, religious and other organizations to provide health care and social support to those infected, as well as concerted action by the appropriate ministries to alleviate the impact of AIDS on families and communities.

(Dr. Merson)

In his view, the best means of bringing about a collective response to the problem on the part of the United Nations system in such areas as policy formulation, strategic planning, advocacy and research, as well as a country response that met the needs of each State, was the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS which, following a series of studies, evaluations and analyses, had received the support of the sponsoring organizations and which the latter hoped would receive the further endorsement of the Economic and Social Council.

He pointed out that the process of developing the programme had been a response to the need for greater coordination and unity in the struggle against HIV/AIDS, and said that, in his opinion, the organizations taking part in it had been acting in good faith and to the extent of their capabilities. He noted that the partnership that had been initiated could not be limited to the sponsoring organizations, and that the challenges ahead would involve the expansion and consolidation of the partnership with Governments, non-governmental organizations and other organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as groups representing people living with HIV/AIDS.

In conclusion, referring to the participation of WHO in the administration of the programme, he said that WHO planned to review, with the other sponsors, its operational practices and procedures in such areas as budget and finance, audit, personnel management and supply services to determine how best to meet the needs of the programme and to ensure that it had the infrastructure support it required. WHO appreciated that it would be accountable to the Member States, the sponsors and the Director of the programme for day-to-day management of the programme, and looked forward to working with its partners in those and other challenges that lay ahead.

Ms. REID (Director, HIV and Development Programme, division for Global and Interregional Projects of the United Nations Development Programme) said that the speed with which HIV was spreading throughout the world and the potential devastation which it could bring to communities and nations made coordination of the United Nations system response imperative. Cooperation was all the more necessary because of the multidisciplinary and multidimensional nature of the interplay between the epidemic, the health and well-being of people and the development of nations. Significant progress had been made in that respect already, as the United Nations system was becoming increasingly aware that it was engaged in a collective venture, in a

(Ms. Reid)
voluntary endeavour to respond to that epidemic, and that its success or failure would be visible not only to Member States, the media and public opinion, but also to all those who might, or might not, be spared by that common endeavour.

The organizations participating in the joint programme had already committed significant human and financial resources to the process. They were working towards a common policy that would reflect and reinforce their people-centered approach and capture the multifaceted nature of the epidemic. The heads of the six organizations had clearly signalled that their future new relationship had to involve a synergistic and mutually supportive use of each organization's skills and resources so as to form a flexible whole that was capable of responding to the changing nature of the epidemic and of entering into true partnerships at the national and global levels. They had further embarked on a process of rethinking and exploring ways to make their assistance more effective and sustainable. Their contribution depended, however, on the collaboration of Governments, of other United Nations and bilateral agencies, non-governmental and community organizations, intergovernmental organizations and individuals.

In conclusion, she noted that international support for development assistance was flagging, and an increasing proportion of it was being directed towards emergency aid rather than towards human survival and sustainable development. That was the challenge which had to be faced with determination and imagination.

Mr. NOBLE (Canada), referring to predictions that 40 million people would be infected with the AIDS virus by the end of the present decade, said that that indicated the need to coordinate international efforts to combat the spread of the disease as effectively as possible. The joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS constituted the global community's renewed response to the unrelenting threat that it presented.

Canada actively supported the development of the joint United Nations programme and was one of the sponsors of a draft resolution calling on the Economic and Social Council to support the establishment and further development of the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme. He invited those delegations which wished to do so to join the sponsors.

The programme was based on the principle of co-ownership, which involved shared commitment for its realisation and the definition of its orientation, and collaboration in the planning and execution of its activities. It would

(Mr. Noble, Canada)

provide global leadership for normative activities relating to HIV/AIDS in areas such as social and economic planning, population, culture, education, community development and sexual and reproductive health. At the country level, each sponsoring organization would provide assistance to national activities in its area of expertise in a coordinated, multisectoral manner.

His delegation strongly supported the participation of non-governmental and community-based organizations and groups of people living with HIV/AIDS in the programme activities. It must have the broadest cooperation possible in order to overcome the challenges posed by the disease.

He requested the support of the Economic and Social Council for a new and innovative programme, the creation of which was timely as the United Nations system was being reformed to meet current and future needs. It was important to recognize the work that had been accomplished to date in defining the programme and thus reinforce the support of the international community in working out the remaining details on issues such as governance, resource flows and the organizational structure.

Despite the fact that the resolution that the Council was being asked to adopt could be considered as a first step in making the transition to the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS, it should be acknowledged that there were still many details to be worked out on important issues. Paragraphs 9 and 11 of the draft resolution would facilitate an open process for their definition.

Mr. BELHIMEUR (Observer for Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that over the past decade the problem of AIDS had become one of the greatest threats to humanity, and the response from the international community must therefore be commensurate with the danger it represented.

The Group of 77 and China, whose members included some of the countries most seriously affected by the disease, could do no less that call for the mobilization of all the financial and material means necessary to combat the spread of the pandemic. In that connection, he urged the organizations of the United Nations system to increase their coordination in accordance with the relevant provisions of the General Assembly resolutions. Finally, the members of the Group of 77 and China were prepared to consider all resolutions on that subject submitted for the Council's approval.

Mr. HENZE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that AIDS was a pressing challenge worldwide with grave implications for human development and national and international governance. It could no longer be treated solely as a health issue; its socio-economic ramifications and consequences must be addressed. The Economic and Social Council was called upon to perform a crucial function in coordinating the resources of the United Nations system in the fight against the pandemic.

The European Union had taken note of the progress achieved in the preparatory work in devising a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS, although it would have preferred to see more concrete proposals by the current stage.

In May 1994, the Development Council of the European Union had agreed on a number of common principles and priority strategies to increase the effectiveness of its development cooperation policy in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the developing countries. The European Union had a great interest in the establishment of a joint and co-sponsored programme which would have the primary aim of strengthening national capacities and which would truly respond to the need for a multisectoral approach that fully exploited the comparative advantage of the participating agencies. It would support every effort to enable the Council to take a decision in principle during the current session. As for the structure and functioning of the proposed programme, some important issues were still outstanding. In particular, greater clarity was needed on the role and objectives of the programme, the scope of its activities, its governance and staffing and its financing. It was also essential to set priorities, define the objectives clearly and establish a mechanism for follow-up and assessment, including epidemiological monitoring at the field level.

One of the main objectives of the programme must be to encourage a commitment from Governments to address the crisis and to strengthen their capacity to draw up comprehensive national strategies that involved not only ministries of health, but a broad range of agencies concerned with all aspects of the socio-economic and developmental implications of the pandemic. National plans and priorities constituted the main frame of reference for external assistance and the combined efforts of the programme should be aimed at the strengthening and further development of coordinated national policies and their integration into overall development policies and the early establishment of coordination mechanisms at the country level for HIV/AIDS-related activities.

(Mr. HENZE, Germany)

Prevention strategies must be implemented early. Since gender disparity was one of the most fundamental underlying causes of the rapid spread of HIV among women, especially young girls, the joint and co-sponsored programme should focus on the education of adolescents and aim at improving the status of young girls and women. Infected people must receive support at the family, social and legal levels to enable them to cope with the traumatic effects of the pandemic.

In view of the complexity of the causes and consequences of the pandemic, the multisectoral approach required the participation not only of WHO but of a variety of organizations. The European Union would carefully evaluate the respective roles of the various organizations and emphasized that the fight against AIDS would require different strategies in different countries and regions.

The programme should be flexible and innovative and allow for the continuing cooperation of the participating organizations without leading to static institution-building. It was essential to strengthen coordination of policies and strategies in the field of HIV/AIDS and to encourage collaboration in the formulation of national programmes; in that connection, the participation of the resident coordinators refereed to in General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199, would be crucial.

It was important to make use of the experience gained at the field level, the participation of the co-sponsoring agencies in national strategies, and the comparative advantage of those organizations. Their existing programmes must be preserved, where appropriate, during the transition period.

With regard to the human rights dimension of the pandemic, discrimination against persons infected with HIV or afflicted by AIDS should be avoided, in accordance with resolution 1993/53 of the Commission on Human rights of 9 March 1993.

Mrs. RADUCHOWSKA-BROCHWICZ (Poland) said that Poland had been among the sponsors of World Health Assembly resolution WHA 46.37, which had initiated the consultations leading to the consensus among the organizations participating in the programme. Coordination between those organizations would be achieved through the joint management structure of the programme, through a truly coordinated global work plan, through a common fund-raising approach for global activities, and through a centralized focus on technical and strategic policy issues.

(Mrs. Raduchowska-Brochwicz, Poland)

In her country's opinion, the most important advantage of the programme for Member States was its more effective reinforcement of national responses to the epidemic, which would avoid duplication of effort and ensure consistency in strategic policy and technical matters among organizations of the United Nations system. As a result of the strengthening of the existing national coordination mechanisms (presided over by Ministries of Health), the role of the national authorities would be enhanced in the development and coordination of a multisectoral national response. The programme would also ensure a more coordinated, comprehensive contribution by the United Nations to the overall national response. The World Health Organization, as the administrating agency, would play the crucial role in administering the programme.

For those reasons, Poland supported the draft resolution of the Economic and Social Council on a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS, and welcomed the idea of establishing an open-ended working group to elaborate the mandate of the programme, its precise organizational structure and its working methods. The division of labour between the central Secretariat, which would undertake activities at the global level, and the co-sponsors, which would undertake activities at the country level, must, however, be further defined. With regard to financing, Poland supported the concept of financing Secretariat activities through voluntary contributions. However, the mandate of the governing body of the programme, comprised of selected Governments, must be clarified and the criteria for membership should be further elaborated. The Economic and Social Council should also be provided with the appropriate power to review and evaluate.

Finally, Poland urged all participants in the Global Programme on AIDS to spare no effort in moving forward with the implementation of the Global Strategy on AIDS.

Mr. DOUJAK (Observer for Austria) endorsed the criteria set forth by the representative of Germany and said that Austria supported the resolution of the Economic and Social Council concerning the establishment of a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS. Austria considered that the results of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS, although less satisfactory than had been hoped, constituted a valuable scientific contribution in the light of the current state of knowledge; the international community should persist in its efforts to address such public health issues in an unequivocal manner.

(Mr. Doujak)

Austria fully supported the idea of six specialized agencies of the United Nations system participating on an equal footing in a joint programme under the authority of their respective governing bodies and hoped that they would be joined by other organizations or programmes of the United Nations system. The programme would, of course, benefit from keeping administrative costs to a minimum and using the bulk of the resources for concrete operations, leaving the administrative aspects of the programme in the hands of WHO.

Austria wished to make three points in relation to the establishment of clear objectives: the programme would have to take account of the forms of discrimination to which persons infected with the virus or showing symptoms of the disease were exposed and seek to eliminate them, ensuring that promotion of and respect for human rights were a component of all activities under the joint programme; secondly, the programme should be as flexible as possible to ensure that responsibilities were shared among the participants; non governmental organizations in particular had a very important role to play in ensuring effective programme implementation at the country level; lastly, Austria considered that the programme could not be expected to produce satisfactory results unless full account was taken of the drug problem; in that connection, it supported closer cooperation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

Mr. FRIIS (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that while the efforts of the united Nations system to combat HIV/AIDS had been commendable, they had not gone far enough. The keywords in the fight against the pandemic, which had both medical and socio-economic dimensions, were collaboration and coordination, and not competition.

Welcoming the proposal to establish a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS, he said that Member States would have to continue discussing outstanding issues regarding the administration and financing of the programme and to follow its development closely, not only in the Economic and Social Council and the governing bodies of the co-sponsoring organizations but also at the country level and in the field.

Continued collaboration among the six participating organizations through the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations (CCO) was necessary to work out the details of the programme.

In addition, the Nordic countries welcomed the active involvement of Member States and non-governmental organizations in the Task Force on HIV/AIDS Coordination.

Mr. BETI (Observer for Switzerland) said that Switzerland firmly supported the joint and co-sponsored programme described in the draft resolution, commended the efforts of the six co-sponsoring organizations to enhance coordination of their action against the pandemic and thanked in particular the delegations of Canada and Uganda for preparing the draft resolution, which Switzerland was willing to co-sponsor.

The new inter-agency association, whose details remained to be specified, offered many advantages but was not risk-free; it was nonetheless essential to act swiftly, since the disease was inexorably gaining ground and the launching of the programme would take time.

Switzerland therefore wished to emphasize in particular the importance, as stated in the draft resolution, of continuing to implement current activities or activities in the pipeline vigorously and decisively and ensuring that they were not impeded at the headquarters of the organizations by the launching of the joint programme.

Mr. KELLOWAY (Australia) said that Australia, as one of the core group of countries involved in preparing the draft resolution originated by Canada, was pleased to co-sponsor it and would support any consensus emerging from the discussion of the text.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic was a litmus test for the organizations of the United Nations system, since it transcended not only their mandates but the limits of medical knowledge. The fight against the pandemic called for a holistic and comprehensive approach on the part of countries and a coherent response from the United Nations. The United Nations system would have to learn to operate in new ways in order to respond effectively and its organizations would have to assume an equal share of responsibility.

Australia considered that the support so far provided by the United Nations system to national Governments in the fight against HIV/AIDS gave cause for optimism. It commended the efforts of the participants in the joint and co-sponsored programme to cultivate a spirit of cooperation in planning and implementing the programme; in particular, it welcomed the decision to have WHO provide administrative support during both the transitional and implementation phases and appreciated the involvement of WHO, UNESCO and the World Bank, bodies with their own governing structures that had decided to collaborate with funds and programmes in the framework of the Economic and Social Council. It was essential that all six co-sponsoring organizations should continue to support existing programmes during the transitional period.

Australia supported the activities aimed at transforming the inter-agency working group into a formally constituted Committee of Co-Sponsoring Organizations.

(Mr. Kelloway, Australia)

In addition, it supported the request that the six co-sponsors should submit by January 1995, for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council and other concerned parties, a detailed proposal on the structural, programmatic, administrative, financial and staffing aspects of the programme and a legal document for its formal establishment.

Australia strongly endorsed the emphasis placed in the programme on operations in the framework of national plans and priorities and the idea of helping to develop such plans and priorities in countries where they did not exist.

With regard to the draft resolution itself, Australia was aware of the need to involve various actors, especially those with prior experience in the areas, such as the Task Force; however, the Task Force should not be involved at the expense of other actors and would have to adapt itself to the provisions established by the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations. It was essential that all bodies should continue to draw on the services of their specialized staff with a view to supporting field activities.

Lastly, Australia would appreciate the early appointment of a programme director, given the urgency of the task to be addressed. There was still a great deal to be done, particularly with respect to structural, programme and staffing details. However, Australia believed that the United Nations was equal to the task.

Mrs. KIMBLE (United States of America) said that the United States Government firmly supported the launching of the joint and co-sponsored programme on HIV/AIDS. The programme should clearly concentrate on the country level, since it was there that the impact of AIDS was most severe. Such an approach would ensure that the urgent need to strengthen countries' capacity to respond to the pandemic was much more effectively addressed.

The multisectoral character of the AIDS problem called for involvement not only by the co-sponsoring organizations but by all Member States, which should give top priority to the implementation of the programme. The adoption of a common approach - a programme, a set of priorities, a budget, a national plan for each country - would be the most effective way of combating AIDS at the country level.

Her delegation trusted that the programme would not be an exercise in bureaucratic restructuring but would achieve results in the countries where they were most needed. The six organizations were to be commended on their

(Mrs. Kimble, USA)

resolute action in response to the demands of Member States for a really coordinated United Nations response to a complex problem. The flexibility of the co-sponsors and their effective and continuous cooperation, especially during the transitional period, would be essential for the programme to bear fruit.

The United States was pleased to co-sponsor the resolution drafted by Canada and noted that it left scope for considering in greater detail certain questions that were still pending. The ongoing consultations scheduled for the period until April 1995 would enable all outstanding issues to be resolved and rapid progress to be made in establishing the programme. To ensure the success of the proposed global collective action, it was essential for the Economic and Social Council to adopt the resolution as soon as possible and for the organizations to launch the co-sponsored programme speedily.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that he joined those delegations that had underscored the importance of measures to combat AIDS and commended the six organizations which had taken the initiative to co-sponsor the joint programme. That was a new development in the annals of the United Nations and was necessary since AIDS continued to wreak havoc, particularly in Africa. He noted with satisfaction the draft resolution sponsored by Canada and Uganda, which met concerns that had been expressed since the previous year both in the Economic and Social Council and the Governing Councils of UNICEF and UNDP. His delegation also wished to sponsor that draft resolution.

The campaign to combat HIV/AIDS was a multidimensional issue affecting education, social and economic planning and community development in addition to health. Accordingly, it was necessary to implement a practical and varied programme which would have an impact in the field and not be limited to bureaucratic restructuring.

He hoped that the international community would give comparable attention to measures to combat malaria and formally proposed that the six co-sponsoring organizations should envisage the same process that had led to the joint programme on AIDS in order to draw up a programme to combat malaria.

While he expressed satisfaction with the draft resolution, he would be more enthusiastic if the proposal that he had just made, which was supported by all the African delegations and other tropical countries affected by malaria, was linked to the campaign against AIDS.

Mr. CAMARRA (Director-General, United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)) said that the work by FAO in the field in Africa showed that the incidence of the disease in rural areas varied greatly and that the areas with the highest infection rate usually coincided with major transportation routes and reflected past periods of social unrest. The impact of HIV/AIDS on agricultural activities and rural development was due to the fact that the disease mainly affected working-age groups in the labour force and to its disproportionately high incidence among more educated persons in urban areas. As a result, some communities would experience manpower shortages for agricultural activities and there would be many orphans and elderly people who cared for children. All that would lead to community breakdown and even greater poverty. The systems for cultivating crops tended to become simpler and less diversified and people were growing more food crops than commercial crops, which required greater manpower. It was a cause for great concern that the communities with a higher incidence of cases would irremediably lose a great store of traditional knowledge about agriculture.

In order to demonstrate the work being conducted in the field, he pointed out that FAO had just completed a regional project in Africa, with UNDP financing, on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the agricultural systems and rural ways of life in East Africa (Tanzania, Rwanda and Zambia), which had been launched in May 1993. A number of projects were also being carried out concerning young people in rural areas, with FAO and UNFPA financing, in Uganda, Zimbabwe, China, Viet Nam and Central America.

FAO was a member of the Inter-agency Consultative Group on AIDS, set up to coordinate United Nations activities in that field, and regularly attended the group's bi-annual meetings. Now that a new mechanism was going to be established for the six co-sponsoring agencies, it was not clear what would be done with the activities of the agencies which were not co-sponsors, as was the case with FAO.

Mr. MSENGEZI (Zimbabwe) said that he agreed with the representative of WHO that AIDS had very different aspects and went far beyond the field of health since it has an impact on the sectors relating to women, literacy, migration and poverty. It would be possible to combat the epidemic effectively only through a coordinated and multisectoral approach with the participation of both Governments as well as United Nations agencies and other sectors and institutions. His delegation read with interest and appreciation the report on progress in establishing a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on AIDS (E/1994/71) and noted with satisfaction that the report

(Mr. Msengezi, Zimbabwe)

stressed that the most important function of such a programme was to strengthen national capacity to plan, coordinate, execute and monitor the overall response to the pandemic, including the provision of technical and financial assistance. His delegation was a sponsor of the draft resolution and would cooperate with other delegations in order to reach a consensus.

Mrs. KORPI (Finland) said that her country fully supported the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS and commended the Task Force on HIV/AIDS Coordination and the Management Committee of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS for their very valuable and encouraging work. Nevertheless, her delegation had certain reservations concerning the management and financing structures contained in the proposal by Canada since those aspects had not been thoroughly discussed and some of them were still unclear. She therefore looked forward to the discussions on the draft resolution in informal consultations, which as many agencies as possible should attend in order to put forward their ideas, although it was for the members of the Council to take a decision on the matter.

Mrs. DIOP (Senegal) requested additional information on the report on progress in establishing the joint programme (E/1994/71). Paragraph 19 of the report indicated that the programme would be supported by voluntary contributions to be obtained through a common appeal. It also stated that the costs of programme country staff members could be financed through those contributions. Since the various co-sponsors of the programme already had representatives in each country, she wished to know whether there would be a need for further resources for programme staff members or whether the representatives of the agencies already in the field would be redeployed in order to avoid further expenses, particularly in Africa, where the costs of staff members dealing with AIDS was two or three times greater than the resources actually being used in the fight against the disease. The report also indicated that the programme would not have a uniform regional structure. She wished to know in that regard what the co-sponsors of the programme had envisaged for its implementation at the regional level, particularly in Africa, where resources were practically non-existent. With regard to the transition period referred to in the report and during which current arrangements would seem to remain in effect, it would apparently be necessary to organize the joint programme in a parallel way so that its execution would begin in January 1996. She wished to know what would happen after that date to the projects that were being implemented and had not yet been completed.

Mr. MERSON (Executive Director of the WHO World Programme on AIDS), replying to the representative of Senegal, agreed that the ideal would be to redeploy the staff members which the various agencies already had in the field, but no decision had yet been taken on the way to do that. At the regional level, the agencies had decided that the best approach was to consider needs and then decide on the way to use the regional structures of the various organizations, instead of establishing a uniform regional structure. During the transition period, when the programme's overall budget and plan of work would be drawn up, it would be more advantageous in some cases to use the regional structure of one of the agencies and, in others, to establish a new regional mechanism. While the situation was similar to one involving staffing, the transition period was necessary in order to consider and organize the two issues. The co-sponsors had committed themselves to ensuring that the amount of funds to be used in the six organizations to finance the costs of programme staff members did not in any case or at any level exceed current expenditures.

With regard to the transition period, it was true that the six organizations currently had ongoing activities in the field and each had a different arrangement for those activities. It was necessary to proceed from those six arrangements to the new programme. Time was needed in order to plan the way to redeploy staff members without reducing the pace of any of the activities currently being carried out and at the same time to plan the future and gradually make the transition to the new programme, progressively reducing activities so that at the joint response remained at the same level. In the current phase, it was impossible to be more specific since no plans had yet been made for the period 1996-1997, which would be done through such mechanisms as the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations, which was recommended by the Council, and through the transition team, which that Committee had been given the task of establishing. The next report to be submitted to the Council, at the latest in April 1996, would be able to provide further details on the questions of staffing, regional action and the gradual transition from current activities to the new programme. In order to promote that process, it would be of paramount importance to select the director of the programme as soon as possible. The transition team could begin its work as soon as the current session of the Council came to an end.

The meeting rose at 8.05 p.m.

UNITED
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Economic and Social Council

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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 15 July 1994, at 10 a.m.

President : Mr. BUTLER (Australia)
(Vice-President)

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Social, humanitarian and human rights questions : reports of subsidiary bodies, conferences and related questions: (continued)

(d) Human rights questions

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting is called to order at 10.25 a.m.

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS:

(d) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Statement by the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mr. AYALA LASSO (High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that human rights were now firmly established as one of the indisputable priorities of the community of nations. Their globalization and internationalization were also one of the substantive results of the first half century of the United Nations. Human rights concerns were becoming increasingly intertwined with other activities, as evidenced by the distinct human rights components in the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, for example. In creating the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Member States had endowed it with unprecedented moral and political authority to express the voice of the moral conscience of mankind. His actions as High Commissioner were based on three main principles: cooperation at all levels, a comprehensive and integrated approach to the promotion of human rights and the participation of all in the promotion of human rights at all levels.

The High Commissioner's mandate included the responsibility of engaging in a dialogue with all Governments with a view to securing respect for human rights. The initial stages of that dialogue had been very encouraging. During his first three months in office, he had made official visits to a number of countries, and planned a tour of southern Asia in the very near future. During those visits, he had stressed the need for strengthening international cooperation in human rights, discussed support for the human rights programme and exchanged views on ways to improve human rights protection. As necessary, he had raised human rights problems, and so far his expressions of concern had met with positive reactions.

As the United Nations official with principal responsibility for human rights activities, he attached special importance to system-wide coordination. For that purpose, he intended to establish a permanent dialogue within the United Nations system to promote human rights through a systematic and periodic exchange of information, experience and expertise. At the first meeting of special rapporteurs,

(Mr. Ayala Lasso)

experts and chairpersons of working groups of the Commission on Human Rights, he had stressed that the work of the special rapporteurs was a main pillar of the implementation of human rights in practical terms. A complementary approach must be adopted between the activities of the high Commissioner and the special procedures system; the mandate of the High Commissioner was essentially one of facilitation and coordination. A "human rights hotline" had been established in the Centre for Human Rights as an initial measure in a process designed to obtain emergency information on human rights situations so that it could be dealt with rapidly.

One of his most important responsibilities under General Assembly resolution 48/141 was to play an active role in removing current obstacles to the full realization of human rights and in preventing the continuation of human rights violations throughout the world. Shortly after taking office, he had been confronted with the tragedy in Rwanda which followed the deaths of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi on 6 April 1994. It rapidly became clear that flagrant and massive violations of human rights and humanitarian law were being committed. After consulting the Secretary-General, he had undertaken a mission to the region, where he met the representatives of the Rwandese armed forces and the Rwandese Patriotic Front and made an appeal to all protagonists to put an end to human rights violations, conclude a cease-fire and allow humanitarian assistance to reach all those who needed it. On his return, at a special session of the Commission on Human Rights, he had made recommendations for specific action to bring the cycle of violence in that country to an end. The Commission had decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the situation in Rwanda, who had visited the country and presented a preliminary report containing his observations and recommendations. The Commission had also decided that the Special Rapporteur should receive the assistance of a team of human rights field officers. Further, as a long-term preventive measure, he had been requested to take all necessary steps to ensure that the political efforts of the United Nations aimed at conflict resolution and peace-building included a strong human rights component.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso)

Another very important part of his mandate was to play an active role in preventing violations of human rights. Because the crisis in Rwanda could have negative repercussions in neighbouring Burundi, he had visited that country in order to see the situation first hand and to support Government actions in the field of human rights. During his visit, he had met with the Acting President, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, churches and the media. Convinced that a programme of cooperation and technical assistance in the field of human rights could help in preserving peace in Burundi, he had reached an agreement on a human rights programme that would be part of a comprehensive, integrated approach which included a training component for government officials, the armed forces, police, judges, lawyers and educators in international human rights standards and also provided for education and information in primary and secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. Appeals to the donor community for voluntary contributions to support that programme had met with a number of positive responses. Further, to establish a human rights presence in Burundi, a staff member of the Centre for Human Rights was currently residing in Bujumbura to help implement the first phase of the technical assistance programme.

A number of reports and expressions of concern had been recently received relating to an increase of tension and the danger of new violence in Burundi. In response, he had written to the interim President to express support for all those who were working for tolerance and mutual understanding and expressing particular concern about the use of radio broadcasts and other media to transmit messages of hate and intolerance.

Providing advisory services and technical and financial assistance to programmes in the field of human rights was another important responsibility of the High Commissioner. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights had marked a turning point in United Nations efforts to promote and protect human rights. Certain areas of its implementation would, necessarily, receive priority attention. Those included universal ratification of the basic human rights treaties, the promotion of women's rights and the development of effective measures against racism and racial discrimination. Its provisions

(Mr. Ayala Lasso)

relating to the rights of indigenous peoples, migrant workers, children and minorities deserved close attention, as well.

The Commission had asked him to include among his specific objectives a plan of action for the proposed United Nations decade for human rights education. Consultations were now under way with Governments, specialized agencies, regional organizations, the treaty-monitoring bodies and non-governmental organizations on a draft plan of action to be submitted to the General Assembly. One of the greatest challenges was promoting the right to development, which also entailed seeking more effective ways of protecting economic, social and cultural rights, since the violation of those rights often set the stage for violations of civil and political rights. The World Conference on Human Rights had established indicators to measure progress in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the identification of practical ways to overcome obstacles. He was exploring the design of projects to implement the right to development in all its aspects.

After only a short period as High Commissioner, he could attest to the great possibilities for that office to make real contributions to the improvements of protection and promotion of human rights. The readiness of Governments and all the organs of the United Nations system to join together to promote human rights provided a solid basis for action. Another important element was the hope placed in that office by non-governmental organizations and individuals all over the world. He would make every effort to build on that foundation of trust and hope in order to create a world in which all human rights of all persons would be fully respected.

Ms. KUNADI (India) requested the High Commissioner to elaborate on the proposals for a permanent mechanism to coordinate the work of the special rapporteurs, representatives, working groups and experts of the Commission on Human Rights.

Mr. AYALA LASSO (High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that, at the first meeting of special rapporteurs and representatives, there had been general agreement that almost all the recommendations and decisions contained in human rights declarations and instruments were not receiving adequate follow-up. The lines of coordination must be clarified in order to facilitate their work. That meeting had

(Mr. Ayala Lasso)

recommended that a system of coordination should be developed, and specific proposals were under preparation.

Mr. REY CORDOBA (Colombia) said that the question of appropriate staff and resources to enable the High Commissioner to fulfil his mandate was a matter of concern to his delegation, and he inquired how paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 48/141 had been implemented. He also asked whether the High Commissioner participated in all critical situations involving violations of human rights, or whether the other specialized agencies tended to proceed without his participation.

Mr. AYALA LASSO (High Commissioner for Human Rights) said, regarding the question of resources, that the General Assembly had allocated limited funds for his Office and a limited number of staff. It had taken into consideration that the High Commissioner was to work with the Centre for Human Rights and could make use of its resources until a request for additional resources could be reviewed at its forty-ninth session.

Some activities relating to human rights took place within the context of political activities. The mandate of his Office was to coordinate and direct all of the human rights components of such activities. A technical preparatory process and expertise needed to be developed, in addition to the allocation of more resources.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that insufficient resources would make it difficult for the High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out his mandate. The Council should therefore recommend that the General Assembly provide the necessary financial support for the work of the High Commissioner.

His delegation wished to know whether the High Commissioner had taken any measures to prevent possible duplication and overlapping between the functions of the various mechanisms of the United Nations system that dealt with human rights. He also wished to know what measures the High Commissioner was taking to achieve a balance in the emphasis on each of the various human rights, which included civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights, as well as the right to development.

Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that her delegation had been one of the States Members of the United Nations that had promoted the creation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. As one of the proponents of the

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

United Nations decade for education in the field of human rights, her delegation was eager to hear the results of the High Commissioner's activities in that area.

Mr. MUCH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union fully supported the High Commissioner in the accomplishment of his mandate. The High Commissicner had said that the work of the special rapporteurs complemented the work of the High Commissioner. In view of the fact that the High Commissioner would soon be visiting Cuba, his delegation wished to know whether the High Commissioner would be accompanied by the special rapporteur responsible for studying the human rights situation in that country, or whether the High Commissioner's visit would constitute a prelude to renewed cooperation between that country and the special rapporteur. What precautions could be taken in order to ensure that a country did not use a visit by the High Commissioner to avoid its obligations to cooperate with the special rapporteur?

Mr. FULCI (Italy) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union. All delegations should support the efforts to provide the High Commissioner with the necessary financial resources needed to carry out his mandate.

Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that his delegation associated itself with the question raised by the representative of Benin regarding duplication and overlapping of the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations system, and also supported the remarks made by the representative of Italy regarding financial resources. His delegation strongly believed that the work of the special rapporteurs should be enhanced, and it hoped that the High Commissioner's study of that issue would result in greater coordination of the work of the special rapporteurs, especially between countries and thematic rapporteurs. It would be useful if thematic rapporteurs were allowed to accompany special rapporteurs to countries where their particular thematic issues were of relevance.

Mr. TOMKINSON (Australia) said that her delegation associated itself with those delegations that had emphasized the need to ensure that appropriate resources were provided to the Centre for Human Rights. Her delegation attached considerable

(Mr. Tomkinson, Australia)

importance to the very comprehensive dialogue that the High Commissioner had been undertaking with Governments, since that was one of the major aspects of his mandate.

Mr. CRAPATUREANU (Romania) said that his delegation shared the view that, in order to fulfil his mandate, the High Commissioner needed adequate financial and human resources. In that respect, the Fifth Committee should take a realistic approach and adopt the appropriate decisions.

His delegation commended the High Commissioner for strengthening coordination between his office and other agencies and bodies of the United Nations system that dealt with human rights, and it shared the view that the consolidation of the Office of the High Commissioner shcuild be a high priority.

His delegation wished to know how a possible change in the calendar of activities of the Commission on Human Rights might influence the decisions and activities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mr. Masood KHAN (Pakistan) said that the High Commissioner's visit to Rwanda and its follow-up had set a precedent in that the report of the Special Rapporteur had become the basis for the future work of the Security Council. His delegation wished to know whether that meant that it constituted formal acceptance and recognition of the interrelationship between security issues and human rights issues. It seemed possible that the international community had entered a phase where the artificial divisions between the various aspects of a crisis had been removed and that henceforth any issue, crisis or emergency would be dealt with in its entirety.

His delegation wished to know what criteria the High Commissioner applied in judging whether a situation was serious enough to merit his attention. It also wished to know what measures the High Commissioner would take to avert a human rights crisis. Would such measures include visits to the country in which human rights violations were taking place, or would the High Commissioner initiate dialogue with the Governments concerned?

Massive, gross and consistent violations of human rights had been taking place in Jammu and Kashmir, and he wished to know whether such violations merited the attention of the High Commissioner, or whether the situation would have to

(Mr. Masood Khan, Pakistan)

deteriorate further in order to be considered by his Office. His delegation encouraged the High Commissioner to visit Jammu and Kashmir during his upcoming visit to the Asian region.

Mr. TURK (Observer for Slovenia) said that his delegation had been encouraged by the High Commissioner's remarks about preventive action, and it hoped that the delegations would respond to the specific appeal that he had made in his statement.

His delegation had been encouraged by the High Commissioner's active approach to the subject of education in the field of human rights and was looking forward to the specific proposals that he would make before the beginning of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. In addition, his delegation would like to know the High Commissioner's views on the responses he had received from various parts of the United Nations system with regard to the preparation of specific projects for the realization of the right to development. Finally, his delegation associated itself with those delegations that had emphasized the need for the General Assembly to consider the need to provide the High Commissioner with appropriate financial resources.

Mr. SUCHARIPA (Observer for Austria) said that appropriate budgetary decisions should be taken to support the activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. His delegation was looking forward with great interest to the proposals that the High Commissioner would present to the next session of the General Assembly. Finally, the High Commissioner should provide the Council with more information about the "hotline".

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) said that his delegation was firmly convinced that the activities and mandate of the High Commissioner should gradually be expanded. The High Commissioner could play an important role in strengthening the human rights component in the maintenance of international peace and security. In his visits to countries, the High Commissioner should encourage Governments to participate more actively in international negotiations and treaties on human rights and to fulfil the obligations they had undertaken in that area. In carrying out his

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(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Russian Federation)

activities, the High Commissioner should seek to settle conflicts by giving good advice to States as to how they could improve their human rights situation.

His delegation wished to know what kind of preventive measures the High Commissioner was planning to take, particularly in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, and also what difficulties he had encountered in his dealings with individual States.

Mr. BIGGAR (Ireland) said that his delegation associated itself with the remarks made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly should provide the High Commissioner with the resources he needed to carry out his mandate and, in general, ensure the adequate financing of all human rights activities of the United Nations. His delegation commended the High Commissioner on his swift and decisive action in Burundi and encouraged him to consider whether there might be any other cases in which he could take action to prevent human rights violations.

Mr. MOHAMED (Observer for the Sudan) said that, in his report, the Special Rapporteur for the Sudan had criticized the Government and religion of Sudan. Moreover, after submitting his report, the same rapporteur had participated in dialogues and seminars against the Sudan in many world capitals. The Sudan had written to the Commission on Human Rights about those activities, and it requested the High Commissioner to express his opinion on the matter.

Ms. KUNADI (India) said that a question had been raised by one delegation about a territory belonging to India. The international community had condemned terrorism in all its forms as a gross violation of human rights. It could not be denied that terrorism was a subject of legitimate international concern, particularly when it was aided, funded, abetted and instigated by one Member State against another. Her delegation wished to know what mechanisms the High Commissioner intended to establish to protect human rights from terrorism.

Mr. de CARVALHO (Brazil) said that his delegation was confident that, in his contacts with the Governments, the High Commissioner would further the promotion and protection of human rights. The High Commissioner should use his best judgement on how he should conduct those high-level visits.

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Mrs. SILVERA (Cuba) said that the representative of Germany, speaking on behalf of the European Union, had inquired about certain facts which, in the opinion of her delegation, were not the subject of the current meeting. She wished to emphasize that Cuba, as a sovereign and independent State, had extended an official invitation to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and, in doing so, had expressed, once again, its political will to cooperate with those bodies or agencies that were not selective in nature.

Mr. BOBADILLA GUILLEN (Paraguay) asked whether the Office of the High Commissioner had established coordination mechanisms with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Mr. MOAKAF (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) joined other speakers in congratulating the High Commissioner and commended him on his fine work. His delegation was fully prepared to assist the High Commissioner in carrying out his tasks.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) said that his delegation wished to place on record that Jammu and Kashmir was recognized by the Security Council and on all official maps of the United Nations as a disputed territory. Any unilateral declaration to the contrary by any Government was legally invalid and represented a position which was not recognized by the United Nations.

Ms. KUNADI (India), speaking on a point of order, said that it was not appropriate for one delegation to raise issues that were extraneous to the item under discussion. A debate on the territory in question, which belonged to her country, had already taken place in the Commission on Human Rights.

Mr. AYALA LASSO (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) thanked the Council for its support and, in particular, the representative of Benin, who had appealed to the Council to provide sufficient resources to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In replying to the questions raised by delegations, he would not support any particular view out of a desire to remain apolitical. Coordination was necessary in order to ensure the right to development, to which he would take a concrete and pragmatic approach. Believing that it would be unrealistic to prescribe a global formula for ensuring the right to development, he had already held discussions with a number of international development agencies

(Mr. Ayala Lasso)

and organizations with a view to proceeding on a case-by-case basis. In promoting the right to development, the very sensitive issue of linkages between human rights and development assistance had been considered in depth. He agreed that human rights instruments and bodies must be given all necessary support. In that connection, he viewed the decisions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights as mandates for his Office.

He did not visit countries as a tourist but rather in order to take specific action on human rights issues. His travel was very carefully planned with a view to achieving positive results and avoiding mistakes which might close doors to him. Special rapporteurs, like other international staff members, required the collaboration of all States and were subject to a code of conduct. Criticism by a Special Rapporteur should not be viewed as hostile or discriminatory towards a particular tradition, religion or culture.

Significant strides had been made in internal coordination since the first meeting of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) which had considered the question of human rights and adopted recommendations concerning the establishment of a system for the coordination of all human rights activities in the United Nations system. In his view, an exchange of information on the specific human rights programmes of each agency should constitute the first step in such coordination. He did not believe that his Office should supervise all human rights activities carried out by other agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) or the World Health Organization (WHO). An exchange of information would be intended merely to establish a common orientation in order to avoid duplication of activities and unnecessary expenditures.

Following the establishment of a 24-hour hotline, the annual volume of complaints about human rights violations had risen significantly. He would be submitting a proposal to the General Assembly, requesting additional resources in order to process all the complaints.

He attached great importance to coordination between his Office and regional and subregional organizations, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights,

(Mr. Ayala Lasso)

which was a model for the whole world, and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights. A working group would meet in September to consider reforms in the working methods, agenda and calendar of meetings of the Commission on Human Rights. The Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights had informed the President of the Council of the proposed changes, which he believed were fully justified. Noting that 1995 was the target date for universal accession to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, he said that universal accession to all human rights instruments must be promoted. Technical assistance and advisory services must be provided to States which lacked the experience or appropriate national institutions to bring their domestic legislation into compliance with international human rights instruments. He would be submitting a major proposal to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly concerning an increase in resources for technical assistance.

Mr. Myong-Joo CHOE (Republic of Korea) expressed his Government's gratitude to the High Commissioner for accepting an invitation to attend an international conference on human rights jointly organized by the Republic of Korea and the Centre for Human Rights. Some 30 government representatives and human rights experts from the Asia and Pacific region would be participating in the seminar designed to improve the human rights situation in that region.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1994/SR.35
12 December 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1994

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 18 July 1994, at 10 a.m.

President : Mr. BUTLER (Australia)

later: Mr. BOTEZ (Romania)
(Vice-President)

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Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AN AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Presidential summary of the high-level segment (E/1994/109)

The PRESIDENT read out the text of his summary and conclusions on the high-level segment as contained in document E/1994/109.

Ms. WILLIAMS (United States of America) said that, in the light of the reference to agreed official development assistance targets in the document, her Government felt that it was important to clarify its position on the matter. The United States was not among those countries that had affirmed an official development assistance target, since such a target would detract from the more important issues of effectiveness and quality of aid and the policies in the recipient country. With respect to chapter 33, paragraph 33.13 of Agenda 21, the United States was among those countries which, in line with their support for reform efforts in developing countries, had agreed to make their best efforts to increase their level of official development assistance. The United States had traditionally been among the largest-volume donors and would continue to provide high-quality aid on a case-by-case basis, in a way that encouraged reform efforts in developing countries.

Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said that, for the most part, the President had succeeded in his difficult task of reflecting the diversity of view expressed during the high-level segment. His delegation would however, have welcomed more emphasis on the emergence of transition economies. Those economies represented a new element in the world economic system, but they had been referred to only at the end of the section on the state of affairs, and that reference had not been followed up in the section on priorities. Among the priorities, external factors such as trade, debt, commodity prices, transfer of technology and financial flows were mentioned as having critical importance to developing countries, but many of those factors, especially trade and access to world markets, were important to economies in transition as well.

The fundamental importance of sustainable development should be given more attention, particularly in the section on priorities. The ecological aspects of the right to development should also be stressed.

Mr. RUGE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, while other points could undoubtedly be raised in connection with the President's summary, the European Union was awaiting further discussion on the agenda for development in the General Assembly and the proposals of the Secretary-General.

Mr. HUDYMA (Ukraine) said that his delegation supported the comments of the Russian Federation. It felt that the final document had presented a one-sided picture and should be more balanced.

Mr. CUI Tiankai (China) said that, in drafting the summary, the President had relied on wide consultations, although some points might require further consideration. For instance, the penultimate paragraph of page 3 in the English version mentioned the need to recognize the diversity of the developing world and to strengthen differentiated and comprehensive approaches. His delegation felt that the implications of such differentiation among developing countries should be considered. It understood, however, that the President's summary was not a consensus text, and therefore it would make no recommendations for revision.

Mr. HADID (Observer for Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that, although not all of the Group's points were reflected in the summary, it understood that the President had made a serious and commendable effort to express the diversity of views in a balanced manner. The Group of 77 gave general support to the document in a spirit of consensus.

Mr. CABELLO (Paraguay) said that the first step in strengthening the existing institutions must be to improve the system of development administration by creating one that was truly a United Nations system. Within the Secretariat, an Under-Secretary-General should be appointed to administer the entire technical-cooperation system, putting an end to the separate management of technical cooperation by UNDP and thus avoiding its separatist tendencies, which were detrimental to the effort as a whole. UNDP should be the spokesman for the United Nations programme of cooperation with the recipient countries. Through its extensive field network, it should be supervising project execution in conjunction with the specialized agencies.

Financing for development programmes and projects should be obligatory and proportionate, like the assessments for support to the regular budget. The

(Mr. Cabello, Paraguay)

geographical distribution of technical-cooperation funds should be more equitable. Such funds could be supplemented by means of contributions from the specialized agencies. Closer supervision of project execution and results was needed in order to avoid wasting funds on projects that did not produce results.

A number of points should be added to the discussion of the Agenda for Development. The major problems that could be solved through technical cooperation should be identified and priorities in development policy established both in global terms and for specific regions and countries. When those priorities had been established, decisions should be made on what action should be taken, who should execute it and where the financing would be found. In organizational terms, the machinery needed to advance the execution of those priorities should be examined. One of the basic obstacles to effective technical cooperation was the lack of coordination, both at Headquarters and in specific countries. In determining an agenda for development, a number of questions must be answered with regard to the role the United Nations should play in development, the role of the international financial institutions, and how the growing number of non-governmental organizations could be included. The situation regarding economic development policy, both in general terms and for specific regions or countries must be clarified. More discussion was needed with regard to the creation of a specific agency within the United Nations system to deal directly with human development.

Mr. EL MOAKAF (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) commended the President for his brief but comprehensive summary of the views expressed by members of the Council. His delegation had hoped that the President would also address the problems faced by countries against which economic sanctions had been imposed and that he would appeal to the international community to lift those mandatory sanctions in order to allow those countries to promote their economic development.

Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that the President's summary would provide a useful document for the Economic and Social Council in its follow-up work on agenda for development. He noted that during the high-level segment, the Director-General of FAO had discussed food security and the crucial problem of food production in Africa. His organization

(Mr. Camara)

regretted that the President's summary had not reflected the proposals made by the Director-General of FAO during the high-level segment. He suggested that a reference to the problem of nutrition and food security should be added to the summary, specifically in the paragraph of the section on priorities which read, in part: "action programmes must give appropriate priority to the education, health and welfare of people". He also inquired as to whether the recommendations referred to in the penultimate paragraph of the section on priorities would be addressed to the specialized agencies as well as to United Nations bodies. FAO believed that it was appropriate for the General Assembly to address recommendations direct to the specialized agencies.

Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) agreed with previous speakers that the problems of countries with economies in transition had not been adequately addressed in the President's summary and conclusions. That document would be submitted for review by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, at which time it would be possible to discuss the conclusions and priorities in greater detail. While development issues were universal, his delegation believed that a more explicit reference to the specific problems of countries with economies in transition should be included in a document summarizing the report of the Secretary-General on an agenda for development.

Mr. ATABEKOV (Observer for Kyrgyzstan) said his delegation agreed with previous speakers that a summary which was to lay the foundations for the future activities of the Economic and Social Council regarding an agenda for development should also address the problems of countries with economies in transition.

The PRESIDENT said that all of the delegates' views would be reflected in the summary record of the meeting for future consideration. When compiling his summary, he had attempted to reflect, in a balanced way, the debate which had taken place in the Council during the high-level segment on the theme of agenda for development. In that regard, he wished to emphasize the universality of the fundamental points made throughout the text regarding the state of affairs in the global economy. The priorities for action applied to all States, whether they were developed, developing or in transition. The views of those delegations which had

(The President)

found the text inadequate with regard to the particular problems of economies in transition would be reflected in the record for future action.

Further action on an agenda for development would take place not in the Council but in the General Assembly. While it was vital that the views of the Council should be expressed and recorded, the making of action-related recommendations for review by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session was a taste for the Secretary-General in his follow-up to agenda for development. The views of the Council set forth in the President's summary would constitute a constructive contribution to the follow-up and further action for the implementation of an agenda for development by the General Assembly.

Mr. Botez (Romania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS: TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction of draft resolution E/1994/L.17

Mr. CHLOVSKI (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) introduced draft resolution E/1994/L.17 entitled, "Right of access of land-locked States to and from the sea and freedom of transit". The draft resolution recalled several relevant General Assembly resolutions and two international conventions relating to the particular needs and problems of land-locked developing countries and included the request that all Member States should abstain from any actions that infringed on the rights of land-locked States and reverse any decisions that might have been made in violation of that right. The purpose of the resolution was to exert a positive influence on trade and development in the Balkans, ant that could be achieved if all States of that region respected the right of access of land-locked States to and from the sea and the freedom of transit through the territory of those States.

(b) COOPERATION IN FISHERIES IN AFRICA (E/1994/79);

(f) NATURAL RESOURCES (E/1994/26);

(g) ENERGY (E/1994/24 and Corr.2; E/1994/75; E/1994/NGO/5);

(i) STATISTICS (E/1994/29);

(k) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO MITIGATE THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES ON KUWAIT AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION RESULTING FROM THE SITUATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND KUWAIT (A/49/207-E/1994/92);

(m) CHARTER OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF STATES (A/49/179-E/1994/82)

The PRESIDENT introduced the second cluster of sub-items under agenda item 6.

Mr. OSSA (Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, contained in document A/49/179-E/1994/82. The report discussed how recent developments had affected the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. The main purpose of the Charter was to codify some of the basic principles guiding international economic relations. While the need for generally acceptable principles as a solid basis on which to build an increasingly interdependent world economy was undisputed, there continued to be some divergences about specific provisions of the Charter. It was generally recognized that international economic relations should take account of new paradigms and trends in international cooperation for development. New approaches reflected greater emphasis on sound national economic policies and structural adjustments, the role of market forces, the focus on human-resources development and the eradication of poverty, the imperative of ecologically sustainable development and the need for social integration and justice.

The report mentioned the positive developments related to the elimination of colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination. While those developments demonstrated that progress had been achieved with regard to the implementation of several provisions of the Charter, certain aspects of the Charter required further consideration in order to accommodate differences of approach. The new paradigms of international cooperation for development would have to be translated into operative arrangements leading to tangible results. Further review and assessment of the main features of the international economic system could include improvement and adaptation of the instrumentality of the Charter as an important element of that process.

Mr. CONSTANTINOU (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the report on energy exploration and development trends in developing countries (E/1994/75) updated previous analyses of trends in energy consumption and production and focused on problems and issues over the next two decades in the light of evolving political, environmental and technological changes. Important changes in the structure of energy industries had been accelerated by privatization, downsizing and the application of modern technologies.

In 1970, world energy consumption had totalled 4.5 billion tons of oil equivalent (toe). By 1991, it had increased to 7.6 billion toe, and by the year 2020 that total might increase to 13.8 billion toe. The projected growth in energy consumption was based on the assumption that energy-efficiency efforts would continue and even improve in the years ahead. Fossil fuels accounted for more than 90 per cent of world energy consumption, giving rise to environmental concerns at the national, regional and global levels. Carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels were expected to double by the year 2020, and large increases were expected in nitrogen compounds and sulphur emissions. Most of the future growth in the consumption of fossil fuels was expected to occur in the developing world, whose share of world consumption was projected to increase from the current figure of 26 per cent to 48 per cent by the year 2020.

Much of the developing world continued to depend on traditional sources of energy. Energy scarcities were widespread. On the eve of the twenty-first century, 2.5 billion people in developing countries had little or no access to commercial energy supplies, including electricity. Paradoxically, as more energy was consumed, more energy reserves were discovered. The limits-of-growth phobia had been replace by a state of abundance and oversupply, with obvious consequences for primary-commodity prices.

The price of crude oil had not greatly increased because new oil and gas technologies had made it possible to tap vast petroleum reserves in deserts, jungles, the Arctic and offshore areas. Furthermore, the widespread adoption of free-market policies in the countries of the former Soviet Union, in China and in developing countries had opened up new areas with considerable oil and gas potential. As a result, adequate fossil-fuel reserves were assured for many years to come. At current rates of consumption, oil reserves would be adequate for a minimum of

75 years, natural-gas reserves for over 100 years and coal reserves for over 200 years.

Vast amounts of capital would have to be invested in new energy facilities, since energy projects were both capital-intensive and long-term. Similarly, heavy capital investment would be required to maintain production capacities and reduce the adverse environmental effects of energy projects. In the oil an gas sector, not much difficulty was anticipated in meeting capital requirements because of the magnitude of profitabilities, widespread direct investment by transnational oil corporations, increased privatization of national oil and gas corporations and a growing willingness on the part of export-credit guarantee institutions in developed market economies to facilitate the financing of public-sector oil and gas enterprises in developing countries. Nevertheless, fundamental changes were occurring in policy orientations in those strategic industries, and difficulties would arise unless there was greater cooperation among the main participants. Some progress had been made in the electricity sector through privatization, direct foreign investment and export-import guarantee mechanisms, but deregulation and the opening up of electricity markets would be necessary in many developing countries.

Much of the increase in commercial energy consumption in the oil-importing developing countries during the past two decades had been in the field of oil and natural gas. Oil remained the main energy import items, with annual foreign-exchange outlays estimated at $44 Billion. Since 1991, indigenous oil production in 17 oil-importing developing countries had declined, while consumption had been increasing. Nevertheless, many experts believed that those countries had potential resources. The international community therefore should assist those countries in their efforts to explore and develop their indigenous energy resources, which would be necessary for their economic growth.

Mr. GERJES (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) introduced the report on international cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait (E/1994/92). The United Nations agencies led by UNEP in cooperation with the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) had developed the United Nations Inter-agency Plan of Action soon after the liberation of Kuwait. The report under consideration summarized the results of the assessment of the environmental damage to the region in the aftermath of the conflict. In

(Mr. Gerjes)

addition, a research cruise had carried out an assessment of the impact on the marine environment in the Persian Gulf, and the World Meteorological Organization had evaluated the impact produced on the atmosphere by the oil fires, which had lasted approximately nine months.

The United Nations effort had also helped the Governments of the region to consider rehabilitating their own environment. In that context, UNEP had prepared a Consolidated Rehabilitation Programme for the environment of the ROPME region and a priority action programme. The Rehabilitation Programme contained costed project proposals covering the three environmental components which amounted to $1.2 billion. The priority action programme was costed at $50 million and earmarked for research and rehabilitation of the marine and terrestrial environment, particularly the Kuwaiti desert. UNEP had also submitted specific proposals to mobilize financial resources through the Governments of the region in order to initiate those activities. In June 1994, UNEP had met with non-governmental organizations in the sphere of oil and petroleum production in order to raise funds to draw up a strategy for studying the long-term effects of oil contamination on the marine environment. An agreement to devise such a strategy and provide financial resources to help the Governments of the region assess the long-term environmental damage had been reached.

Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that the report on cooperation in fisheries in Africa (E/1994/79) focused mainly on the support provided by FAO for the major activities undertaken in cooperation with the Ministerial Conference on Cooperation in Fisheries among the African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean. The Convention establishing the Conference had been signed by 10 States and ratified by two, while two other States had deposited their instruments of accession with the Director-General of FAO. The Convention would enter into force with the deposit of the seventh instrument of accession or ratification. The third session of the Ministerial Conference was scheduled to be held in November 1994. FAO would report on the outcome of that session to the Council at its 1995 substantive session.

Mrs. ALAWADI (Kuwait) said that the environment had been a major victim of the war between Iraq and Kuwait. Her country had requested ROPME to take action to deal with two Iraqi oil tankers that had sunk in the region and were polluting the water. Kuwait had asked ROPME to study the position of the tankers and carry out a

(Mrs. Alawadi, Kuwait)

survey of all sunken vessels in Iraqi territorial waters. Reports had underscored the gravity of the situation in the area affected. Experts had also pointed out the critical position of a large Iraqi oil tanker with a capacity of 260,000 tons of heavy Iraqi crude oil that had sunk in Mina al-Bakr. There was a danger that the tanker might break up and cause a huge environmental disaster in the area. Kuwait would be one of the States most severely affected if that happened. In addition, the environmental impact of the draining of the marshlands in southern Iraq should be determined, since that area was very vulnerable environmentally and was of great ecological importance.

In view of the deterioration of the environment as a result of the sunken vessels, Kuwait called upon the Council to recommend that the reports of the experts concerning those vessels should be considered and action taken to assess the impact on the marine environment and consider ways to empty the vessels so as to prevent further environmental damage; that the relevant United Nations agencies should be urged to do their share in coping with the deteriorating environmental situation by providing financial and technical support; that donor countries should be encouraged to contributed to UNEP, earmarking a large percentage of their donations for rehabilitation of the marine environmental; and that the World Bank should be asked to reconsider the needs of the coastal States in obtaining the necessary help from the Global Environment Facility.

Mr. AMAZIANE (Observer for Morocco) expressed regret that the third session of the Ministerial Conference on Cooperation in Fisheries among the African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean had been postponed to November 1994. The member countries of the Conference intended to submit to the Council a draft decision taking note of the report of the Director-General of FAO (E/1994/79), requesting the Secretary-General to submit to the Council at its 1995 substantive session the report of the Director-General of FAO on the activities of the third session of the Ministerial Conference, and calling for the inclusion of a sub-item entitled "Cooperation in fisheries in Africa" in the agenda of the Council's 1995 substantive session.

Mr. RUNGE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, stressed that the work of the Committee on Natural Resources must be relevant to the work of other intergovernmental bodies dealing with related issues, such as the Commission on

(Mr. Runge, Germany)

Sustainable Development. In 1993, the European Union had urged the Committee to be more focused, and some further guidance might be necessary in that regard. He therefore suggested holding informal consultations in order to assess the progress achieved since 1993.

Mr. SPRING (Australia) said that his delegation supported United Nations efforts to accelerate the exploration and development of energy resources in developing countries. Ensuring an adequate flow of resources in support of energy development was fundamental to the overall economic development of those countries. Informal consultations might be necessary in order to clarify some minor aspects of the otherwise very valuable report of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development (E/1994/25).

Ms. WILLIAMS (United States of America) said that her delegation, too, wished to request more time to consider some of the specific recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development. She proposed deferring a decision on the question until informal consultations could be held.

Mr. AL-HABIB (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) pointed out that the Persian Gulf was referred to as "the Gulf" in paragraphs 35, 37 and 38 of the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait (A/49/207). In accordance with circular ST/CS/CR.A/29 and Add.1 and with the practice of the thirty-fourth session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), a corrigendum should be issued.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that his delegation welcomed the note by the Secretary-General on cooperation in fisheries in Africa (E/1994/79). Like the Moroccan delegation, it however was concerned about the postponement, mentioned in paragraph 3, of the third session of the Ministerial Conference on Cooperation in Fisheries among the African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean. His delegation and others would submit a draft decision in that connection. While the report of the Committee on Natural Resources (E/1994/26) represented a tremendous improvement over the 1993 report, parts of it were still inadequate. A decision should be deferred until informal consultations could be held.

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Mr. RUNGE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union welcomed the report of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development (E/1994/25) and, in general, supported the draft resolution submitted by that Committee and its focus on chapter 9 of Agenda 21. In paragraph 7 (b) of the draft resolution, it would have been preferable to use language on technology transfer recently agreed on in other forms and instruments, in particular Agenda 21. The European Union hoped that future resolutions of subsidiary bodies of the Council would use language agreed and would consider who was being asked to take action and whether the recommendations were feasible. In paragraphs 2, 4 and 5 of the draft resolution submitted by the Committee, it was not clear to whom the recommendations were addressed. In paragraph 8, the recommendations on action to be taken by the Secretary-General were so broad as to be of questionable feasibility.

The European Union appreciated the Committee's efforts to coordinate its programme of work with that of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Certain aspects of its work were also related to the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, whose first session would be held at Berlin. The Committee's proposal to held a session in February/March 1995 was acceptable, provided that the session could be financed from existing resources and was recognized as an exception - not a permanent change - in the biennialized calendar of meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Council. The European Union agreed with the recommendation contained in paragraph 8 on strengthening the coordination of energy activities within the United Nations system. In that connection, it urged the different specialized agencies which conducted energy activities to participate in the sessions of the Committee. Perhaps the Secretary-General could select one agency to act as task manager for coordination in the field of energy, along the lines of the task-manager mechanism used by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Coordination efforts already under way in the United Nations Secretariat should be strengthened. In that connection, he stressed the role of the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), which was responsible for the coordination of the activities of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Mr. BELHIMEUR (Algeria) commended the Committee on Natural Resources on its report and expressed his delegation's agreement with the analysis contained in the Summary by the Chairman. Expressing alarm that 30 per cent of the world's population had no access to drinking water, he said that his delegation endorsed the Committee's

(Mr. Belhimeur, Algeria)

appeal to Governments to assign priority to the establishment of a dynamic, interactive and integrated approach to water resources and soil management. In that connection, he stressed the urgency of implementing the relevant provisions of Agenda 21. He also drew attention to the need to ensure that developing countries had the necessary assistance to exploit their natural resources in the context of sustainable development. His delegation supported the adoption of all six draft resolutions brought to the attention of the Council, in particular draft resolution III. Concerned that the replacement of traditional materials by high-technology substitutes would decrease the demand for the export goods of developing countries, his delegation supported, in particular, the request to the Secretary-General to prepare a study on the long-term effects of the more efficient use of mineral products, their recycling and their replacement by high-technology substitutes.

Mr. KISELEV (Russian Federation) stressed that energy-related issues were the province of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and should be considered by the Committee on Natural Resources only in relation to the extraction, processing and utilization of mineral and non-mineral resources and to the privatization of the mining industry. The Committee could take up those questions at its third session in the context of coordinating sustainable-development efforts within the United Nations system. It should also discuss the utilization of environmentally sound technologies in mining. His delegation welcomed the Committee's focus on the utilization of the by-products of the mining industry and on the importance of foreign capital in that initiative. The Committee could play a vital role in ensuring the harmonization of decisions.

The report of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development was to be commended. The Committee must seek to strengthen coordination in the field of energy. In that connection, it should consider formulating a unified programme of action on energy conservation, which would include the participation of other organizations of the United Nations system and the relevant non-governmental organization. That would enhance its coordinating role in the field of science and technology. Its coordinating role in the area of sustainable development could be strengthened by the periodic preparation of an

(Mr. Kiselev, Russian Federation)

analytical survey of policy in the area of science and technology which focused on energy-related and environmental issues.

Mr. BIVERO (Venezuela) said that, while his delegation attached great importance to the recommendations of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development, there was a huge gap between the technical recommendations of experts and a commitment by the international community. His Government did not entirely agree with the Committee's working hypotheses or with the points stressed in some of its recommendations. The Council should consider whether it would be wise to adopt recommendations which would affect the energy policies of Member States without first gauging their viability or political acceptability in developing, developed, energy-producing and energy-consuming countries, or considering other intergovernmental processes taking place in the United Nations. Perhaps further consultations were needed.

Mr. DOUJAK (Observer for Austria) said that the report of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development was encouraging in a context of renewed awareness of energy-related issues following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and of Agenda 21. His delegation welcomed the proposal to hold a session of the Committee in February/March 1995 in order to prepare for the consideration of energy for rural development (chap. 14 of Agenda 21) at the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Council must seek to enhance interaction between the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development. His delegation also welcomed the Committee's proposal to hold further consultations on improving coordination in the field of energy and would be pleased to participate in them.

Mr. LOZANO (Mexico) said that his delegation, too, wished to defer action on the very broad proposals contained in the report of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development until further consultations could be held.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1994/SR.36
12 December 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1994

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 18 July 1994, at 3 p.m.

President : Mr. BUTLER (Australia)

later: Mr. BOTEZ (Romania)
(Vice-President)

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Economic and environmental questions: Reports of subsidiary bodies, conferences and related questions

(a) Sustainable development

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (E/1994/33, 43, 47 and 108)

Mr. TÖPFER (Germany), speaking as Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development, introduced the report of the Commission on its session (E/1994/33), pointing out that, as noted in Chapter II, paragraph 7, the overall financing of Agenda 21 and sustainable development had fallen significantly short of expectations and requirements. The Commission had reiterated the need for increased efforts to implement all the financial commitments made in Rio at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including the need to bring official development assistance levels in line with the 0.7 per cent target, as reaffirmed in Agenda 21, as soon as possible. In that connection, the Commission was considering the imposition of emission charges. It would also be useful to develop a matrix of policy options and financial instruments and mechanisms to facilitate the formulation of optional financing strategies for the sectors.

Additional efforts were also essential in the area of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building, and priority attention would be given to access to and dissemination of reliable information on environmentally sound technologies, institutional development and capacity-building, and financial and partnership arrangements between countries and between the private and public sectors.

Considerable progress had been made in the area of trade and environment by working towards closer cooperation between the Commission, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and by strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Development Programme. With the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round, efforts needed to be made to ensure that all developing countries benefited from trade liberalization as well as better terms of trade. It was equally important to make trade and environment policies mutually supportive.

(Mr. Töpfer, Germany)

The Commission had reaffirmed the need to change these patterns of which consumption and production were detrimental to sustainable development. It had also agreed that developed countries should take the lead by adapting effective measures for change in their own countries (chap. I, para. 43).

Concerning specific sectoral issues, a request had been made to develop the prior-informed-consent procedure into a legally binding instrument. Moreover, a vigorous request had been made to ban the export of domestically prohibited chemicals from countries that were members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to other countries. The Commission had also recommended that the Economic and Social Council should invite the Committee on Natural Resources to address the question of freshwater as part of the comprehensive assessment at its third session in 1996. Concerning forests and the possible clash with the land use issue, he would initiate, in consultation with the Bureau, effective ways of enhancing coordination and complementarity in the preparatory work for the meeting of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Sectoral Issues.

It was also important to develop realistic and understandable sustainable development indicators which could supplement national reporting and provide a useful tool to measure progress towards sustainable development and global partnership. The Commission must continue to expand its contacts with other bodies within and outside the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO. The Commission had stressed the importance of involving all major groups in the process of sustainable development, including non-governmental organizations. In that connection, he drew attention to the recommendation contained in Chapter I, paragraph 24 (b) of the report.

Mr. LAMANRA (Observer for Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that fresh and additional resources as well as the transfer of environmentally sound technology to developing countries were crucial to the implementation of sustainable development. In that connection, the mandate of the former working group on technology transfer must be incorporated into the mandates of the two inter-sessional working groups on finance and sectoral issues. The concept of shared but differentiated responsibility must be reflected in all relevant areas

(Mr. Lamanra, Algeria)

through practical measures that took into account the considerable constraints developing countries faced in their attempts to achieve economic, social, cultural and ecological recovery and development. The issues of trade and the environment should not be contemplated from a single perspective; it was important to ensure that they would not lead to disguised forms of protectionism to the detriment of developing countries and that the new Committee on Trade and the Environment, to be established under WTO, would work closely with UNCTAD and the Commission. As for consumption and production patterns they must be completely changed especially in the developed countries. Finally, the Group of 77 hoped that the International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, would come into force as early as possible.

Mr. HENZE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Commission must maintain the political momentum required to tackle major issues pertaining to sustainable development. While the language of the decisions could have been more specific, the results of the Commission's second session were broadly encouraging.

With respect to sectoral issues, in most cases specific markers would allow measurement of further progress. The general language in the relevant decisions, however, needed to be translated into action. The European Union welcomed the Commission's decision to review the results of its second session at its third session and strongly encouraged the Bureau to consult further on how such follow-up efforts could be carried out without overloading future sessions. The work accomplished on freshwater and toxic chemicals, for example, demonstrated the importance of adequate inter-sessional preparation for setting priorities and drawing up concrete action plans.

The European Union welcomed the more focused mandates for the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Groups on Finance and Sectoral Issues. However, it was essential to clarify how they would operate. Concerning the issues of changing consumption and production patterns, although the Commissions's recommendations needed to be made more specific, important principles had been established. For

(Mr. Henze, Germany)

example, it had been acknowledged that developed countries should take the lead by adopting effective measures for change, in their own countries and that all countries should benefit from establishing and maintaining more sustainable consumption and production patterns. The importance of internalizing environmental costs and using economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, had also been reaffirmed, although a more forward-looking approach on the latter issue would be desirable. The European Union would contribute as concretely as possible to efforts to develop a work programme for sustainable consumption and production patterns.

It was crucial to ensure the maximum coordination and complementarity of the work programmes of the Commission, the World Trade Organization and other relevant forums, including UNCTAD and UNEP. The European Union was pleased that the Commission planned to review annually developments in the area of trade, development and environment; it also attached importance to the presentation of substantive replies to the Secretary-General on the issue of a study on the relationship between the protection of the environment, international competitiveness, job creation and development.

The exchange of national experiences in the implementation of Agenda 21 should be intensified in order to further enrich the discussion of sectoral and cross-sectoral issues. Parallel to the formal meetings of the Commission, interested countries might wish to meet to discuss how they were implementing Agenda 21. The establishment of national commissions on sustainable development in a number of countries was a welcome development, as were the initiatives taken to facilitate exchanges of experience. National reports were an important contribution to the work of the Commission and the simplified guidelines for their preparation would be valuable in highlighting progress achieved and problems encountered. Work on indicators for sustainable development should be accelerated. Initially, even preliminary versions of such indicators should be utilized in order to promote progress in that area.

Only if the Commission could agree on satisfactory reporting procedures would it be able to fulfil its important monitoring mandate and conduct continuous follow-up

(Mr. Henze, Germany)

leading to the overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21 in 1997. The bureau of the Commission should consult broadly on how to improve its work methods well before the third session. If members made their views known in advance in writing, there might not be any need for a general debate. Focused panel discussions or presentations by lead speakers were a useful way to open discussion on major issues on the Commission's agenda in 1995 and to encourage informal discussions among the ministers present. Depending on the themes chosen, it might be helpful to closely involve the business community and other major groups and to encourage broader participation at the political level. The sheer volume of decisions taken at the second session had placed a serious strain on negotiating capacities during the session. Options for decisions to be taken at the third session should be made available well in advance in order to allow enough time for consultations.

In view of the rowing importance of inter-sessional activities, the European Union believed that, in future, the Bureau should be elected early enough to enable it to provide adequate guidance to the preparatory process leading up to the Commission's sessions.

The bureau and the United Nations Secretariat had a vital role to play in ensuring effective inter-sessional preparation. Encouraging additional inter-sessional activities and enhancing coordination, where necessary, and integrating them into a coherent preparatory process, with the substantive involvement of experts and major groups and the enhanced participation of those responsible for development, planning and finance were essential for substantive preparation of the 1995 session. Non-governmental organizations could also make a substantive contribution.

The European Union encouraged transparency and an intensified exchange of views with regard to the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development had a crucial coordinating role to play, and Member States therefore should be offered timely and regular information on its activities. The European Union supported the proposals of the Chairman of the Commission on the conduct of inter-sessional activities, including those on forest issues.

Ms. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America) said that her delegation fully supported the results of the Commission's second session and urged their full implementation. There were five elements that it believed were crucial to strengthening the relevance and effectiveness of the Commission and enhancing the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

First, submission to the Commission of national information on the aspects of Agenda 21 scheduled for consideration at each session should be improved in terms of quantity (the number of countries submitting such information) and also qualify (timeliness, succinctness and ease of comparison with other countries' submissions). Her delegation also felt that the use of a set of environmental, social and economic indicators of sustainable development would simplify reporting and facilitate comparisons. The Chairman of the Commission had a mandate to identify and encourage the use of such a set of indicators and her delegation took note of his indication that he intended to do so.

Second, the preparation and use of national sustainable development strategies must be encouraged and facilitated. A central part of the working level segment at the Commission's next session could usefully be devoted to national experiences in developing and applying such strategies.

Third, coordination by the United Nations system for the implementation of Agenda 21 must be made more effective; as the agenda for development evolved, it should draw on Agenda 21 as a core element and incorporate recommendations from the major international conferences held in 1993. The reports by task managers of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) on various chapters on Agenda 21 should be compiled into a system-wide implementation strategy.

Fourth, the role of development assistance in implementing Agenda 21 deserved more attention, and fifth, inter-sessional activities must continue, in particular the work on forests. That work would be very significant in shaping perceptions of the Commission's value and usefulness; the Chairman's role would be critical in shaping that effort and he should receive unstinting support from the members of the Council and of the Commission.

(Ms. Williams-Manigault, USA)

The United States of America would focus its inter-sessional efforts on addressing threats to coral reefs and reducing human and environmental exposure to toxic substances.

Mr. TIANKAI (China) said that his delegation fully supported the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 regarding the future work of the Commission.

The Commission's primary task was to implement the agreements reached at the Rio Conference; fulfillment of those commitments would determine the success or failure of international cooperation on the environment and the credibility of the United Nations in that field. On questions of finance and the transfer of technology, little progress had been made, and in some areas there had even been regression. According to General Assembly resolution 47/191, the Commission's top priority was to monitor progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, including progress in the implementation of commitments, including those related to the provision of financial resources and transfer of technology. The Commission therefore needed to make greater efforts to carry out that work.

Pre-conference preparations in respect of issues considered by the Commission, especially cross-sectoral issues, must be improved. All those issues were very complex but in many cases there had not been sufficient research. It was not enough for the Commission to spend two weeks a year on such issues; full background data must be collected, and the documentation must be thoroughly prepared. A broad exchange of views was needed in order to lay a solid foundation for the Commission's work. Inter-sessional working groups had an important role to play. His delegation hoped that the inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Finance would be able to make real progress on the issue of the transfer of technology. The Commission's links with other bodies needed to be strengthened, since the issues it considered were closely related to issues considered in other bodies. The Commission should make full use of the research carried out by such bodies. At the same time, it should communicate the results of its work to other bodies of the United Nations system.

Finally, he noted that the Commission's report had been distributed very late and that the Chinese version was not yet available.

Mr. SHIBATA (Japan) said that the results of the Commission's second session were encouraging. At that session, his delegation had urged the Commission to strengthen its role as the central intergovernmental body responsible for translating the spirit of Rio into concrete action and had stressed the need for it to be given a high political profile. To that end, the Commission must not shrink from expressing its views on controversial issues.

His delegation attached great importance to the Commission's decisions on trade and the environment and, in particular, its call for closer collaboration with the World Trade Organization and other relevant international bodies. In that connection, he drew attention to the decision taken at the Marrakesh Ministerial Meeting to establish the Committee on Trade and Environment.

Mr. MONABE (Benin) said that his delegation's views coincided with those put forward by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77.

Agenda 21 had been very eloquent on the question of financial resources and much had been said and written about the need to honour the commitments made. The Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Finance had produced a report which had marked a regression from Agenda 21. The situation had been remedied somewhat at the Commission's second session but concerns remained because the provisions regarding new and additional resources to ensure sustainable development, especially in developing countries, were vague. His delegation called on the Commission to continue its efforts to achieve more concrete results. The same considerations applied to the question of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies for the benefit of developing countries.

His delegation supported the comments of the representative of Algeria on the crucial issues of trade and the environment and on WTO, but was concerned about the fate of developing countries, especially the least developed countries, since there could easily be a slide into a new protectionism. It called on the Commission to ensure that relations with WTO were open and transparent so as to avoid such dangers. It also appealed to States to sign the International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and its original annexes so as to make it possible for the Convention to enter into force.

(Mr. Monabe, Benin)

His delegation supported the recommendations made by the Commission at its second session and the Chairman's efforts to improve its working methods. It hoped that the suggestions made by the representatives of Algeria and China would be given serious consideration.

Mr. LOZANO (Mexico) said that it was regrettable that the documentation on the item had not been received until the current meeting.

His delegation supported the results of the Commission's second session but felt that it would be premature to say that substantial progress had been made in relation to the agreements reached at Rio. It felt that, in addition to evaluating progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Commission should study the difficulties which had arisen, and determine what international cooperation was needed, especially in financial matters and the transfer of technology, since the transfer of environmentally sound technologies was essential to promoting sustainable development.

His delegation agreed with other delegations that it was important to have consultations on how to improve the working methods of the Commission. It believed that the high-level segment should be held at the beginning of the Commission's session so as to provide significant input and that a format should be found that would allow time for a dialogue among ministers and a frank exchange of experience in implementing the commitments made in Agenda 21.

Mr. DOUJAK (Observer for Austria) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union by the representative of Germany. The second session of the Commission had been very constructive. Further attention must be addressed to the question of changing consumption and production patterns in order to enhance understanding of the changes needed and the ways to effect them in a manner compatible with a market-oriented economy. The Commission must play a crucial role in encouraging the more efficient use of resources, particularly in developed countries.

All countries would profit from broader sharing of information on their experiences in implementing Agenda 21. His delegation welcomed the elaboration of

(Mr. Doujak, Austria)

more simplified guidelines to that end. In the long term, a way should be found to fully exploit useful data made available to the Commission.

Inter-sessional activities were a helpful contribution to the work of the Commission. For example, several recommendations by experts attending the International Symposium on Sustainable Development and International Law had been reflected in the Commission's recommendations on decision-making structures and trade, environment and sustainable development.

The Commission had again succeeded, through its high-level segment, in sustaining the political momentum generated at Rio. The issues involved required political commitments from Governments. His delegation hoped that over time, more ministers with portfolios other than the environment would be drawn into the process, thereby helping to further integrate environmental and developmental concerns.

Lastly, he agreed with speakers who had underscored the importance of adequate financing and of ensuring affordable access to environmentally sound technologies. Further efforts must be made to implement the decisions reached in Rio, and his delegation welcomed the inter-sessional activities planned in the coming months.

Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil) said that his delegation believed that the Commission should be strengthened as a forum for the coordination of initiatives relating to the environment at the multilateral level. The financial resources which had been assembled so far in the field of the environment had been quite disappointing; the Chairman of the Commission, in his oral report, had drawn attention to the unsatisfactory level of funds devoted to the environment. The transfer of technology was essential in order to promote sustainable development; however, in that area, as in the area of financial flows, little progress had been made.

On the question of inter-sessional activities, his delegation stressed the importance of the existing working groups on finance and on sectoral issues to ensure balanced pattern in the Commission's work. Brazil's initiative to establish an inter-sessional working group had been approved at the Commission's second session; the objective was to maintain the momentum of the various initiatives, assure the coordinating role of the Commission and promote transparency. His

(Mr. Florencio, Brazil)

delegation felt that the inter-sessional working group should meet early in the second half of 1994 so as to safeguard that role.

His delegation felt that the treatment of the various issues relating to the environment should be approached in a balanced way and that no individual issue should be singled out as more relevant than others. Progress in one area without progress in another should be a cause for concern: there had to be an integrated approach to the environment.

While indicators were relevant to work in the area of the environment, it had to be borne in mind that if they were used prematurely without a rigorous methodology they could do more harm than good to the cause of sustainable development. They should not be used without a solid basis both in terms of the underlying methodology and in terms of the capacity for effective implementation.

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) agreed with earlier speakers that it was vital to change the timetable of the Commission's work and that the Commission must interact with other United Nations and non-United Nations bodies and also with the Global Environment Facility.

Like many speakers before him, he also stressed the need for balance in the work of the Commission.

His delegation welcomed initiatives to help the least-developed countries and countries with economies in transition. It also supported the statement of Germany on behalf of the European Union. It was vital to rethink the dialogue concerning the implementation of Agenda 21. The reports presented to the Commission needed to be studied and analysed so that their priorities could be identified. He hoped a more rational work programme would soon be available.

Mr. CHYUN (Republic of Korea) requested that the United Nations agencies and international organizations should study the inter-relationship among national policy objectives such as trade liberalization, environmental protection, employment and economic development, and report its results to the Commission at its third session. His delegation felt that in the light of the abolition of the inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Technology Transfer and Cooperation, the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Finance and the newly established

(Mr. Chyun, Republic of Korea)

Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Sectoral Issues must be certain to include the issue of technology transfer in their discussions.

Since developed countries contributed greatly to pollution and the depletion of scarce natural resources, they should set an example by changing their own patterns of consumption. They should report to the Commission at its next session on what policies and measures they had adopted to that end. His delegation supported the idea of a work programme for sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Mr. AMAZIANE (Observer for Morocco) said that while his delegation supported the work of the Commission at its second session, it regretted that greater attention had not been given to the issue of technology. He stressed the importance of discussing the role of politics in technology transfer.

His delegation associated itself with the declaration of the Chairman of the Group of 77 regarding the need for additional financial resources and the importance of technology transfer.

Regarding the best time for holding elections, he suggested that they could either be held at the end of each session, or else a one-day organizational session could take place in January every year for the purpose of electing the new bureau.

Regarding duplication between the general debate at the beginning of the Commission's session and the high-level ministerial meeting at the end, he felt that either the high-level meeting should be held at the beginning of the session, or the general debate should be redefined to encourage dialogue rather than speeches.

He praised those countries which intended to sponsor expert or intergovernmental meetings in preparation for the third session but stressed that it was important for developing countries to participate in those meetings.

Mr. BASMADJIEV (Bulgaria) said that the Commission on Sustainable Development was an important part of the follow-up process to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It was important to identify concrete solutions to problems, particularly in the areas of financial resources, transfer of environmentally sound technology, and cross-sectoral issues. His delegation supported the inclusion of forests and biodiversity in the provisional agenda for the

(Mr. Basmadjiev, Bulgaria)

third session of the Commission and recognized the importance of involving other international organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

As a country with an economy in transition, Bulgaria was attempting to achieve economic stability through sustainable development. It shared the view that national governments should promote policies aimed at utilizing all available resources and, as a country experiencing serious economic difficulties, it supported initiatives for debt relief.

Bulgaria recognized the importance of environmentally sound technologies and national capacity-building in the sphere of environmental protection. Like other countries with economies in transition, it was hampered by insufficient funding for research and development and by limited possibilities for purchase of high-technology products. There was an urgent need for wider access to such products on a concessional rather than a commercial basis through the use of grants and soft loans.

Mr. MARTYNENKO (Ukraine) said his delegation felt that the Commission should make broader use of its authority to coordinate in the field of sustainable development. More attention must be given to the problems of developing countries and countries in economic transition. If the international community did not move toward integration of sustainable development into the agenda of countries with economies in transition, greater problems might ensue. The desire of those countries to become integrated into the world community should be discussed at the third session of the Commission.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the process initiated at the Rio Conference must be implemented at all levels, national, regional and global, and that the basic ideas of Agenda 21 must be included in the work of financial institutions and those involved in technology transfer. Initially, all agencies involved in the follow-up to the Rio Conference had given priority to intergovernmental and inter-agency activity, but it was time to pay more attention to national and regional action, financial institutions, and interaction between governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Secretariat was heartened by the continuing commitment of all countries to the success of the process initiated in Rio.

Ms. BEKELE (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that WHO had contributed substantially to the Inter-sessional Workshop on Health, the Environment and Sustainable Development held in Copenhagen in February 1994. A major recommendation of the Workshop, which had subsequently been confirmed by the Commission was the necessity of integrating health, environment and sustainable development goals and activities through innovative and holistic approaches. In connection with the lines of health reform recognized by the Commission (E/1994/33, para. 105), WHO, with support form UNDP, was working on an initiative to bring health and environment together in national planning for sustainable development. The first stage of the project involved eight countries, and others would be approached as new funds were mobilized. Initial results were encouraging but much work remained before it could truly be said that the spirit of Rio had generated progress with respect to health issues.

The five priority areas singled out in the Commission's decision on human health (E/1994/33, para. 108) provided a practical basis for progress within the policy framework established at Rio. Those five areas were already reflected in WHO's activities. WHO hoped that the Commission's decision would increase their priority and encourage the mobilization of additional funds. The decision of the Commission must also permeate other work of the Commission and, most important, the thinking of national authorities responsible for sustainable development.

During the Commission's second session, health had been discussed only as a sectoral theme. Although it was generally acknowledged that human health was intimately affected by cross-sectoral policies, there had been no real opportunity to explore how human health should be viewed as an element of all cross-sectoral areas. That was a matter of some concern to WHO.

Noting that the Commission had invited the World Health Assembly and other relevant intergovernmental bodies to take its recommendations fully into account, she said that the Assembly had endorsed the WHO Global Strategy for Health and Environment in May 1993 and could be expected fully to support the recommendations of the Commission.

Mr. VARCHAVER (Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) fully supported the work of the Commission and had

(Mr. Varchaver)

entrusted its own Committee on the Environment to undertake a study annually on parliamentary action in the fields dealt with by the Commission and on the obstacles encountered by parliaments in that context. The first such study, conducted in May 1994, had shown that while parliaments were very aware of the outcome of the Rio Conference and various aspects of sustainable development, the work of the Commission was seldom if ever brought to their attention.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1994/SR.37
12 December 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1994

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 19 July 1994, at 10 a.m.

President : Mr. BOTEZ (Romania)
(Vice-President)

CONTENTS

Coordination segment

Implementation of the agreed conclusions of the 1993 coordination segment of the Council relating to (i) the coordination of humanitarian assistance: emergency relief and the continuum to rehabilitation and development (continued)

General segment

Economic and environmental questions: Reports of subsidiary bodies, conferences and related questions (continued)

(b) Cooperation in fisheries in Africa (continued)

Coordination of United Nations activities related to HIV/AIDS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED CONCLUSIONS OF THE 1993 COORDINATION SEGMENT OF THE COUNCIL RELATING TO (i) THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE: EMERGENCY RELIEF AND THE CONTINUUM TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/1994/L.16)

Draft decision E/1994/L.16

Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada), introducing the draft decision, said that it was designed to provide further information on the rapid response coordination problem and on the status of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). It echoed paragraph 8 and referred to paragraphs 11 and 13 of the General Assembly resolution 48/57 on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations. Unfortunately, those paragraphs had not been fully implemented. The draft decision was procedural in nature and a final version would be submitted following consultations later in the week.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (continued) (E/1994/L.20)

(b) COOPERATION IN FISHERIES IN AFRICA (continued)

Draft decision E/1994/L.20

Mr. AMAZIANE (Observer for Morocco) introduced the draft decision on behalf of its sponsors. The first session of the Ministerial Conference on Cooperation in Fisheries among the African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean had been held in Morocco in 1990 and the second, in Senegal in 1992. Unfortunately, for reasons beyond the control of the States participating in the Conference, the third session, scheduled to take place in Cape Verde in 1993, had been postponed to November 1994. The draft decision was intended to ensure the report of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the activities of the Conference would be considered at the Council's substantive session of 1995. As the draft was purely procedural in nature, the sponsors hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

COORDINATION OF UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES RELATED TO HIV/AIDS (continued) (E/1994/L.18)

Draft resolution on the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (E/1994/L.18)

Mr. NOBLE (Canada) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, which had been joined by Algeria, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, France, Gabon, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal, the Russian Federation and Spain. The draft resolution was the result of extensive consultations among many delegations representing all regional groups and a series of discussions with the six co-sponsoring agencies, which had worked very hard to develop the initiative. The starting point for their work had been the establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group, shortly after the adoption of World Health Assembly resolution WHA 46.37 in May 1993 calling for a study to be undertaken on the feasibility and practicability of establishing a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS. After the Executive Board of WHO had endorsed the proposed programme in January 1994, the Inter-Agency Working Group had begun laying the groundwork.

He drew attention to paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution, which urged endorsement of the joint and co-sponsored programme by the Council and its full implementation by the organizational session of the Council in 1996; and to paragraphs 6, 7 and 8, which stressed the priority given to country-level activities while maintaining the HIV/AIDS activities already being implemented by the co-sponsors. The fundamental characteristics of the programme were described in an annex. The draft resolution stressed that the programme was a truly co-owned endeavour to which the co-sponsoring agencies were equally committed and in which they shared responsibility. As the organizational structure, staffing and funding of the programme remained to be finalized, paragraph 4 of the resolution called for the immediate transformation of the Inter-Agency Working Group into a formally constituted committee of co-sponsoring organizations in order to facilitate the transition to full implementation of the joint and co-sponsored programme.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1994/SR.38
12 December 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1994

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 38th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 20 July 1994, at 10 a.m.

President : Mr. DANGUE REWAKA (Gabon)
(Vice-President)

CONTENTS

Social, humanitarian and human rights questions: reports of subsidiary bodies, conferences and related questions:

(a) Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

(f) Social development questions

(h) Narcotic drugs

(i) International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

(j) Cultural development

(k) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS

(a) SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/19943/91, E/1994/22, E/1994/66, E/1994/67, E/1994/77; E/1994/NGO/2, E/1994/NGO/3)

(f) SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91)

(h) NARCOTIC DRUGS (A/49/139-E/1994/57, E/1994/30, E/1994/42)

(i) INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91; A/CONF.172/4 and Add.1-4; E/1994/85, E/1994/87)

(j) CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (A/49/159-E/1994/62 and Add.1 and 2)

(k) UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (E/1994/41)

Mr. HANSEN (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs) said that while the most severe phase of the emergency in Somalia was over, the humanitarian situation there remained precarious and there was a need for continued relief assistance for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The difficulties and delays in achieving a lasting political settlement had a direct impact on the security situation, which continued to impede the efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance and the transition from relief to reconstruction and development. Despite those obstacles, the international community, together with Somali relief organizations and personnel, had been able to make significant progress in assisting Somalis in all parts of the country. The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations had continued their humanitarian work in the face of serious security constraints which had claimed the lives of many Somali and expatriate relief workers.

There had been an overall improvement in the nutritional status of the population, and health facilities had been upgraded over the past 12 months. Humanitarian organizations and a number of non-governmental organizations continued to support hospitals and health centres throughout the country and training was being provided to community health workers, traditional birth attendants and laboratory technicians. Nevertheless, the health and nutritional status of large segments of the population remained precarious. Mortality rates were still high and cholera, tuberculosis and malaria posed serious health problems for a large number of vulnerable groups.

(Mr. Hansen)

Communicable and preventable diseases were being dealt with through the provision of essential drugs, medical supplies and equipment. Prompt action to coordinate the efforts of various agencies had been instrumental in containing a recent cholera epidemic and keeping fatality rates reasonably low. A number of organizations were facing resource shortages, since they had had to divert funds and supplies from ongoing programmes in order to tackle the epidemic at very short notice.

The food supply situation remained serious for a large segment of the population. Farming activities continued to be seriously hampered by the massive displacement of people and the slow pace of their return to their farms owing to the prevailing insecurity. In the field of education, United Nations agencies and several non-governmental organizations had taken numerous steps to rehabilitate primary and Koranic schools.

There were still some 220,000 Somali refugees registered in camps in Kenya, of whom up to 70,000 were expected to return to Somalia during the remainder of 1994. Adequate resources must be made available to UNHCR and cooperating non-governmental organizations to enable them to continue the repatriation programme and implement community-based reintegration projects.

One of the major problems in Somalia was that of the estimated 400,000 internally displaced persons. There was an urgent need to implement a coordinated assistance programme for displaced persons, using a phased approach. UNOSOM was carrying out a programme to resettle such persons, in the hope that there would be sufficient improvements in the security situation. Attempts were also being made to assist in mine removal and demobilization. An encouraging start had been made in assisting demobilization in north-west Somalia. If political leaders honoured their commitment to voluntary disarmament, it would be possible to start a programme for demobilizing and reintegrating armed militias throughout the country. Many militia members were teenagers who needed training to facilitate their reintegration into civil society.

Assistance for reconstruction would be directed to those regions which established minimum security conditions for implementing activities. To date, multi-donor missions had been working with authorities in two regions, and profiles for additional regions had been prepared as a basis for future missions to review the priority needs of those regions.

Humanitarian organizations were working closely with UNOSOM to improve the coordination of international humanitarian efforts, plans and strategies.

(Mr. Hansen)
The main objective for the remainder of 1994 was to ensure that, whenever feasible, the deployment of UNOSOM troops and the strengthening of the Somali police would complement the implementation of humanitarian activities. Despite concerted efforts, such activities continued to face difficult security constraints. Increased banditry and fighting, together with attacks against humanitarian agencies and their staff, had forced a number of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to suspend their assistance programmes in some areas and reduce or withdraw their staff. The most pressing need now in Somalia was for national reconciliation and peace. Although humanitarian assistance would continue to be provided without preconditions to meet requirements, the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of such assistance must be improved. Moreover, if reconstruction and long-term development were to be addressed effectively, peace and security must prevail.

On 6 February 1994, a major earthquake had struck western Uganda, affecting more than 50,000 people. According to available information, almost $500,000 had been provided by the international community, including assistance in kind, to cope with the effects of the disaster. The Governments of Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Japan and Norway had all made significant contributions.

The extent of the devastation had demonstrated clearly that neither the national Government nor development agencies had been adequately prepared for such a disaster. The challenge, for both the Ugandan Government and its development partners, was to ensure that the emergency response was viewed in the broader context of national development measures, particularly those that could reduce future susceptibility to disasters and their negative consequences.

Mr. SOMMEREYNS (Director, Department of Political Affairs) said that the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon (UNARDOL) was in preparation and would be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Profound changes had taken place in Lebanon. The consolidation of authority by the Government, improved security and growing confidence in the prospects for reconstruction were reflected in the increased presence of United Nations organizations in that country. Owing to those positive developments, United Nations operational activities had increased with respect to humanitarian assistance, emergency rehabilitation, integrated area development, drug control enforcement, environmental health and agriculture. The improved

(Mr. Sommereyns)

performance was also due to emergency rehabilitation assistance for South Lebanon. The UNARDOL Coordinator had continued to provide leadership in support of national objectives and programmes for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon and to promote the activities of different inter-agency working groups and task forces.

Field-level coordination had been complemented by the system-wide coordination ensured by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. The entire United Nations system had extended full cooperation and support to UNARDOL. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), one of the largest contributors, had implemented projects in the areas of institutional rehabilitation and policy advice; social reconstruction; balanced economic development; and environment. The World Bank had extended a loan of $175 million for the Emergency Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Project, $2 million of which had been disbursed to finance high-priority emergency reconstruction in the electricity, water and educational sectors and to provide credit for housing and technical assistance. In late June, two World Bank loans for irrigation and fiscal management projects, amounting to $77 million, had been approved. A $13-million project of the World Food Programme (WFP) was providing supplementary feeding to the poorest rural and urban population groups through educational, health and social welfare institutions. The coordinated response to the emergency in South Lebanon and the western Bekaa in July 1993 had been a major accomplishment of UNARDOL during the reporting period. The United Nations system, the High Relief Committee and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working together had provided emergency relief during and immediately after the acute phase of the crisis, and their inter-agency needs assessment had resulted in a joint appeal of US$ 28 million. They had also prepared and implemented emergency rehabilitation in the housing, agricultural and health sectors. Thanks to the UNARDOL Coordinator's active follow-up of the joint appeal, the Government had been able to cover all emergency relief and rehabilitation needs resulting from the events of July 1993.

Since its establishment, UNARDOL had helped to focus international attention on Lebanon during the civil war, assisted the Lebanese Government in mobilizing the necessary resources following the signature of the Taif accords, and carried out reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes in the context of post-conflict peace-building. However, the full effect of enhanced development activities was not expected to be felt before the end of the

(Mr. Sommereyns)

1994-1995 biennium. In the meantime, UNARDOL should continue to play its catalytic role, supporting Government efforts and facilitating activities of the United Nations system aimed at the economic recovery, reconstruction and development of Lebanon.

Mr. JAEGER (Deputy Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Acting Director, Regional Bureau for Arab States), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to Yemen (E/1994/67) and the report of the Secretary-General on emergency assistance to Madagascar (E/1994/66), said that since July 1993, United Nations agencies in Yemen had been forced to function under conditions of increasing political instability and, ultimately, armed conflict. Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, the agencies had played an active role in responding to emergency needs during the fighting. Drawing on emergency reserves or special programmes, they had coordinated the delivery of medicines, basic food supplies and medical equipment. When the fighting had ended, they had undertaken a joint mission to Aden and the southern region to assess the needs of the population. In collaboration with other donors and non-governmental organizations, they had addressed people's most immediate needs - food, fresh drinking water and medical supplies. UNDP had transported three tankers of diesel fuel from Sana'a for the pumping of water. A shuttle water service of 15 tankers would be carrying fresh water from Lahej to Aden, where the shortage of safe drinking water was aggravating the risk of epidemics. UNDP had also obtained the Government's agreement to reprogramme between US$ 4 and $5 million of its indicative planning figure (IPF) towards the immediate rehabilitation of water, sewage and electrical systems.

The Government would have to rehabilitate war-damaged basic infrastructure and re-establish the normal functions of the State in order to address the country's long-standing socio-economic problems. That would require greater and better coordinated economic assistance from the international community.

Emergency assistance to Madagascar in the aftermath of the natural disasters there had been very effective. UNDP had played a significant role in coordinating assistance from bilateral donors, United Nations agencies and international and non-governmental organizations, including CARE International and Caritas. The Resident Coordinator had acted as spokesman for the international community in talks with the Government and had coordinated the efforts of the various committees established to respond to the crisis.

(Mr. Jaeger)

Each of the United Nations agencies had provided assistance in its area of competence, mainly in the form of technical assistance and food. UNDP had offered disaster preparedness training to its national counterparts and had established two crisis units to coordinate the efforts of international donors. Those units had been bolstered by the establishment of a National Aid Council to deal with emergency situations. In the last two months, the donor community had restored the railway, main roads and communications with remote areas. It had also helped to provide technical assistance, equipment and credit to rebuild housing units, rural dispensaries and schools. However, additional efforts were necessary in order to cope with cyclone damage. Many people in Madagascar were still homeless, living in tents or temporary housing, and the risk of a food shortage remained very high.

Mr. PETERS (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)), introducing the summary report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/1004/41), said that in 1993, the Office had assisted some 23 million people, including some 16.4 million refugees and certain groups of internally displaced persons. By far the greatest tragedy in the past year had been the political and ethnic conflicts in Burundi and Rwanda. In recent days, as many a 1 million additional refugees had fled to Zaire, bringing the total number of refugees outside Rwanda to over 2 million persons. Relief flights had resumed on 19 July after the shelling of Goma had ceased: some 14 flights were scheduled to provide assistance.

Early warning signals in Rwanda had enabled UNHCR to make initial preparations for the emergency through the rapid deployment of emergency teams and the prepositioning of relief supplies. In close cooperation with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, WFP, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNDP, United Nations Volunteers, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and numerous NGOs, the Office was coordinating a massive emergency assistance operation in the various countries of asylum. However, the current crisis in Zaire entailed enormous humanitarian needs. Food requirements alone would amount to 600 metric tons per day, water resources were desperately scarce, and local infrastructure to support a major humanitarian operation was virtually non-existent. Moreover, the presence of such large numbers of refugees in a volatile region had provoked friction with the local population, increasing the risks for humanitarian aid workers. In Rwanda, meanwhile, thousands of

(Mr. Peters)

people were reportedly suffering from malnutrition, and if crops could not be harvested before the end of July the Rwandese would be completely reliant on humanitarian aid.

The report described a number of successes, including the repatriation of 380,000 refugees to Cambodia within the framework of the Paris Peace Agreement; the conclusion of an agreement on voluntary repatriation from Bangladesh to Myanmar; the historic developments in South Africa; and the repatriation of over 700,000 Mozambican refugees from six neighbouring countries.

Successes at the regional level included the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees (CPA) and the formal conclusion of the process initiated under the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA). Under the Comprehensive Plan of Action, some 62,000 Vietnamese refugees had voluntarily returned to their country from camps in South-East Asia and Hong Kong. At the closing ceremony of CIREFCA, an eight-point plan had been adopted to address outstanding tasks, in particular, development for the most disadvantaged areas and population groups.

Increasingly, UNHCR was operating within the broader framework of international and regional peace-keeping and peace-building activities. In the former Yugoslavia, it was lead agency for relief and assistance. It had participated in the inter-Tajik talks in Moscow in order to help address the problem of displacement in Tajikistan. Following the conclusion of the Quadripartite Agreement on a peaceful settlement of the Abkhaz conflict, an agreement had been signed by the parties, the Russian Federation and UNHCR on the return of displaced persons to Abkhazia. More generally, the High Commissioner was involved in consultations with the Russian Federation and the successor States of the Soviet Union with a view to developing a comprehensive approach to the problem of refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and migrants in that region.

The expanded scale of UNHCR activities had increased funding requirements, which would amount to $1.23 billion for 1994. He expressed concern over decreasing support for General Programmes - the core activities carried out by UNHCR - in the past three years. Special Programmes were also in need of greater support. Programmes in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan and the cross-border programme from Kenya to Somalia had been affected by the shortage of funds.

Mr. ELO (Director of the Secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) and Secretary-General of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction) introduced the report of the Secretary-General of the Conference on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (A/CONF.172/4 and Add.1-4) which, together with other documents had been prepared by the IDNDR secretariat for the mid-term review of the implementation of the International Framework of Action.

Contrary to expectations at the outset of the Decade, there had been a steady increase in the number of natural disasters, the number of victims and the overall economic losses caused by disasters. Disasters linked to environmental deterioration, such as floods and droughts were increasing. Population increase and urbanization were forcing more people to live in disaster-prone areas, and poorly controlled technology was creating new hazards.

Against that pessimistic backdrop, however, changes were taking place. Developed countries had been able to apply available knowledge and technology to reduce the effects of natural disasters, and effective early warning and local disaster management systems had saved lives in developing countries.

With a fraction of what was invested in emergency relief - not to mention military intervention - it would be possible to strengthen national disaster prevention and preparedness programmes or to include mitigation plans in national development plans, and yet investment in prevention was limited because budgets for emergency operations were overstretched.

One positive development was increased awareness of the benefits of disaster reduction. Many countries were introducing disaster prevention and preparedness into their development budgets, and financial institutions were including disaster reduction in their programmes. Regional and intergovernmental organizations were also more aware of the importance of disaster reduction. The World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held in Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994, had had a combined political, technical and scientific focus. The Conference had brought together different constituencies and sectors of society from 155 countries. It had culminated in the adoption by consensus of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World. In a spirit of inter-agency cooperation, major organizations of the United Nations system, scientific associations and non-governmental organizations had all contributed to the organization and financing of the Conference's scientific and technical programme. The host country, Japan, had contributed most of the

(Mr. Elo)

financing for the Conference and, together with other Governments or financial institutions, had provided for the participation of developing countries. Almost 100 national reports had bene submitted, identifying areas for potential cooperation.

The reports submitted to the Council stressed the need to strengthen the capacities of developing countries, regional cooperation and the transfer of existing knowledge and affordable technology in the second half of the Decade. They also pointed to the close linkages between disaster, and sustainable development and the cost-effectiveness of disaster reduction.

Mr. ARFWEDSON (Coordinator, World Decade for Cultural Development), introducing the progress report on the World Decade for Cultural Development (A/49/159-E/1994/62 and Add.1 and 2), said that, since the previous report, activities under the World Decade for Cultural Development had grown considerably in volume and importance and had benefited from a higher degree of commitment by States and organizations. Since the Decade's inception, hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world had been directly concerned by the projects initiated within its framework. Decade activities, often based on themes associating culture with a particular aspect of development or targeting specific population groups, had had a multiplier effect at the local level.

During the biennium 1992-1993, several important steps had been taken, including such major projects as the creation of the World Commission on Culture and Development. The first phase of the project to elaborate a methodology for integrating cultural factors into development programmes and projects had also been completed.

In the course of the mid-term evaluation, the Intergovernmental Committee of the Decade had noted with satisfaction that the rate of project implementation had increased after a slow start partly explained by the rather complex message that the Decade had set out to convey. The Committee had approved the launching of several major regional projects and had urged that a greater emphasis be placed on the Decade's first objective: acknowledging the cultural dimension of development. Several projects under way or in the pipeline, such as the Alexandria library project, required substantial budgets. Since 1992, 21 May had been observed as the Day for Cultural Development, centered each year on a specific theme.

With regard to the participation of the United Nations system, the Intergovernmental Committee welcomed the increased participation of

(Mr. Arfwedson)

United Nations agencies in implementing the programme of the Decade. Further impetus might be provided by the international community's growing awareness that a development model based exclusively on economic growth carried with it great risks of creating social and cultural imbalances. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had launched a process of reflection on "people-centered" development which would be continued at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. Those two meetings should pave the way for a more general recognition of the importance of the cultural dimension in all development endeavours, at both the policy-making and the operational level.

Mr. GHODSE (International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)) said that the dialogue between the Board and the Council was an important part of the Board's mandate to oversee the implementation of international drug control treaties. In its report (E/1994/42), the Board urged the international community to increase its cooperation and to mobilize greater resources for drug control. With the end of the cold war and the development of closer ties between countries, the greater openness of national borders had been exploited by organized crime and drug cartels, and a fundamental change in the level and nature of illegal trafficking had taken place.

At its most recent session, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had adopted a resolution on the role of INCB, calling on Governments to adopt and publicize the necessary measures to enforce drug control treaties. The Commission had encouraged the Board to include in its reports constructive suggestions on how Governments might adjust their domestic legislation to treaty provisions.

He gratefully acknowledged the professional support provided to INCB by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and was confident that such support would continue. He drew attention, however, to the difficulties created by the Board's exclusive reliance on regular budget resources. Its budgetary allocation had not been increased for years, while operating costs had risen steadily. That situation might ultimately have an impact on its ability to take on new tasks and challenges.

Cooperation between Governments and the Board was generally very good, one particularly fruitful area being the prevention of attempts to divert psychotropic substances. However, Governments did not always respect their reporting obligations under the international drug control treaties. Furthermore, Governments' cooperation with the Board in implementing provisions concerning chemical precursors needed to be enhanced.

(Mr. Ghodse)

He believed that the international community had no choice but to strengthen international drug control without delay and that it must make a strong common political commitment to that daunting task.

(a) SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

Mr. ROESCH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he wished to offer some suggestions regarding disaster relief. Faced with an increase in the number of natural disasters and complex emergencies, and the resulting devastation, relief efforts must balance the immediate needs of the most vulnerable groups, who were usually those most severely affected in such circumstances, and the medium- and long-term development needs of the area concerned. Sustainability was the key to the long-term effectiveness of humanitarian and economic aid. The European Union had participated actively in bilateral and multilateral relief and rehabilitation efforts and supported the concept of the relief, rehabilitation and development continuum.

Over the years, a growing number of resolutions had been adopted appealing for humanitarian and economic aid. The European Union recognized that the needs in question were urgent, but was concerned that the large number of individual resolutions might actually be counterproductive. It therefore proposed that the issue should be approached through an omnibus resolution, as discussed in the Second Committee at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. It would be happy to participate in the preparation of such a text.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take note of the oral reports on assistance to Somalia and Uganda, assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon, and the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, and the reports contained in documents E/1994/66 and E/1994/67 on assistance to Madagascar and Yemen.

It was so decided.

(i) INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

Mr. ROESCH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that natural disaster reduction was a global issue but had yet to achieve the desired political impact. The European Union expected that, in line with the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, adequate cooperation would develop between the IDNDR secretariat and the Disaster Mitigation Branch. Furthermore, the Director of the IDNDR secretariat should have the necessary

(Mr. Roesch, Germany)

authority and should be able to report directly to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. The obstacles to an action-oriented approach could be overcome by tapping the potential of IDNDR more fully. The Yokohama Conference had been an important step forward and the Strategy provided a realistic, unbiased status report on natural disaster reduction and a feasible plan for the second half of the Decade and beyond.

Disaster prevention could no longer be considered in isolation, it must become an integral part of the continuum of relief, rehabilitation and development. Only then would a global culture of prevention take shape. The European Union would continue to support IDNDR, with a view to streamlining its operations to ensure a more action-oriented, practical approach.

Mr. GHAFOORZAI (Observer for Afghanistan) said that Trust Fund resources for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction should give priority to the early warning system for least developed, landlocked and small island developing States. Within the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, several existing activities should be regrouped and strengthened in order to create an emergency centre for humanitarian assistance and reporting. Such a centre would maintain statistics on available aid and services, secure and provide the required assistance on an emergency basis and systematically enrich its data on the capabilities of disaster-prone countries, submitting recommendations to such countries on how they might improve their disaster mitigation capabilities.

Mr. YE Dabo (China) said the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and the Yokohama Message, adopted at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, had provided important guidelines for further activities under the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Since natural disasters often struck across national frontiers, disaster reduction was a shared responsibility of all States. It was estimated that 90 per cent of natural disasters occurred in developing countries, and 65 per cent of the related deaths and injuries were sustained by those same countries. Thus, the international community and, in particular, the developed countries should increase financial aid and technology transfers in the field of disaster reduction to the developing countries, so as to enable them to build their capacity for disaster mitigation.

Ms. INAGA (Japan) said that the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction had provided an opportunity to consider future ways of mitigating natural disasters and had generated interest in the International

(Ms. Inaga, Japan)

Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction on the part of the international community, and in particular, policy makers. The Plan of Action adopted at the Conference identified specific actions to be taken at all levels and emphasized international cooperation and the need to provide adequate support for follow-up activities, including a review conference at the end of the Decade. Her delegation urged the Council to endorse the conclusions of the World Conference and called on all States to further the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy.

Mr. MARTYNENKO (Ukraine) said that the convening of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and the documents adopted at that Conference indicated there was greater recognition of the problems related to natural disaster mitigation. Supporting the efforts of the developing countries to reduce their vulnerability to natural disasters, he stressed that the Principles contained in the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World stated specifically that each country bore the primary responsibility for protecting its people, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of natural disasters. Although some results had been achieved during the first half of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, they had not been equal in all areas. His delegation favoured expanding the concept of natural disasters to include other emergency situations related to ecological and technological disasters and believed that the activities of the United Nations in the area of natural disaster reduction should be maintained beyond the Decade.

(k) UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Mr. SNOUSSI (Morocco) said that while his delegation appreciated the increasing role of UNHCR in assisting refugees throughout the world, it regretted that certain errors regarding the situation in Western Sahara had slipped into the UNHCR report contained in document E/1994/41. Specifically, the inaccurate description of the united Nations settlement plan contained in paragraph 188 of that report could prolong the suffering of the refugees in camps in Jindouf and delay their return. According to Security Council resolution 809 (1993), in conformity with the settlement plan regarding the questions of Western Sahara (S/21360 and S/22464), it was for the Secretary-General to determine the instructions for the review of the applications for participation in the referendum. UNHCR had implied incorrectly in its report that the agreement of the parties regarding the criteria for voter eligibility

(Mr. Snoussi, Morocco)

was a precondition for the implementation of the settlement plan. In its resolution 907 (1994), the Security Council had agreed that the identification and registration of potential voters should be carried out on the basis of the Secretary-General's compromise proposal. Therefore, the issue raised by UNHCR in its report was obsolete, especially since the other side had addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council in which it had accepted Security Council resolution 907 (1994). In order to preserve the credibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, his delegation asked that paragraph 188 of the report (E/1994/41) be amended in line with the relevant reports of the Secretary-General and resolutions of the Security Council regarding the situation in Western Sahara.

Mr. LEBEDEV (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federal Migration Service (FMS) had estimated that there were currently more than 500,000 refugees, 1 million displaced persons and 500,000 economic migrants in Russia and that the overall number of new immigrants to Russia could reach 6 million people. The lack of adequate financial and material resources to meet the needs of refugees in accordance with the terms of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees had led to a critical situation.

The situation of refugees in Russia and in other former Republics of the Soviet Union reaffirmed the conclusions of the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights regarding the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to the coordination of international action with regard to refugees, displaced persons and migrants. The adoption, at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, of resolution 48/113 on the convening of a United Nations conference for the comprehensive consideration and review of the problems of refugees, returnees, displaced persons, and migrants was a step towards finding a solution to those problems at the global level. While his country had encountered difficulties in dealing with the situation of refugees, it in no way intended to depart from the commitments it had undertaken in acceding to the 1951 Convention. The Russian Federation intended to become a member of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner for Refugees and was committed to increasing international cooperation for the protection of the rights of refugees and displaced persons. By adopting measures in that field, the international community would help to curb the dangerous trend towards an uncontrolled increase in refugee flows and establish a framework for the voluntary repatriation of such individuals. The signing of a

(Mr. Lebedev, Russian Federation)

Quadripartite Agreement on the voluntary repatriation of refugees and displaced persons to Abkhazia and the establishment of a Quadripartite Commission with the participation of the Russian Federation and UNHCR were practical measures that had helped to manage the repatriation process in that region.

Mr. GHAFOORZAI (Afghanistan) said that his country had perhaps the largest number of refugees requiring urgent international assistance. Considering the gravity of the plight of Afghan refugees, his delegation would have appreciated a more extensive analysis of that situation in the UNHCR report. There were currently more than 3.5 million Afghans living aborad who were unable to return to their homes for a variety of reasons, including the existence of more than 10 million land mines and the lack of sufficient funds from UNHCR.

Referring to paragraph 125 of the report, which recalled the case of Afghan refugees in New Delhi, he noted his delegation's appreciation for the assistance received by India. However, the UNHCR grant had been the sole source of support for those refugees, and had been discontinued because of budgetary constraints. On behalf of the refugees, his delegation urged UNHCR to seriously consider reinstating that assistance until the individuals in question were in a position to return home.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1994/SR.39
12 December 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1994

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 39th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 20 July 1994, at 3 p.m.

President : Mr. DANGUE REWAKA (Gabon)
(Vice-President)

CONTENTS

General segment

Social, humanitarian and human rights questions: reports of subsidiary bodies, conferences and related questions:

(h) Narcotic drugs (continued)

(j) Cultural development (continued)

(k) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (continued)

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In the absence of Mr. Butler (Australia), Mr. Dangue Rewaka (Gabon), Vice-President, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (continued)

(h) NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued) (E/1994/30)

The PRESIDENT pointed out that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had recommended three draft resolutions and four draft decisions for adoption by the Council. The texts of the draft resolutions and draft decisions could be found in chapter I of the Commission's report (E/1994/30).

Draft resolutions I to III

Draft resolutions I to III were adopted.

Draft decisions I to IV

Draft decisions I to IV were adopted.

(j) CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/49/159-E/1994/62 and Add.1 and Add.2)

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of the World Decade for Cultural Development during 1992-1993.

It was so decided.

(k) UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (continued) (E/1994/41)

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) commended the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (E/1994/41) and praised the work of the Office of the Commissioner in providing aid to refugees. The fact that 80 per cent of refugees were women and children was a cause for concern. His delegation appreciated the attempts of UNHCR to provide aid to those victims and stressed that such programmes must be strengthened. Earlier speakers had mentioned the problem of shortage of funds and its effect on refugee programmes in various countries, among them Afghanistan. Four million refugees from Afghanistan were still in Iran and Pakistan, and lack of funds was one factor preventing those who wished to return to the now peaceful areas of Afghanistan from doing so. While it was true that the number of refugees in Afghanistan had decreased marginally from 1992 to 1993, it was unlikely that some 800,000 refugees would be able to return to their homes during 1994.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

There had been a drastic reduction in funding as a result of the UNHCR phasing-down approach, which had placed a heavy burden on Pakistan, particularly since donor countries had reduced their contributions in anticipation of a reduction in need. But the phasing-down process must be delayed until conditions for voluntary repatriation improved. The political parties in Afghanistan were committed to the return of the refugees, and Pakistan had worked to produce favourable conditions for their repatriation. His delegation hoped that, after 16 years in Pakistan, the refugees would soon be able to return home.

Mrs. SILVERA NUÑEZ (Cuba) drew attention to paragraph 108 of the report, which mentioned the situation in Haiti. Cuba had recently found itself in great difficulty as a consequence of the unilateral decision of a neighbouring country with regard to Haitian refugees. That decision affected the sovereignty of the Republic of Cuba because it involved the naval base at Guantanamo Bay, illegally occupied by the United States of America against the will of Cuba. The United States authorities had claimed that the base would be used only to collect those Haitians who qualified for refugee status, but, in fact, Guantanamo Bay was being used as a classification centre to select those who qualified for refugee status from among a much larger group of Haitians. Moreover, since the base was illegally occupied, its use for any purpose whatever was contrary to the will of the Cuban people. The Government of Cuba, itself in a period of economic crisis, must now deal with the Haitian refugee problem in matters ranging from medical care to the repatriation of refugees from Cuba to Haiti. Her delegation thanked UNHCR for working with Cuba to resolve the problem of refugees from Haiti and other countries but felt that the matter should be referred to, in paragraph 108 of the report or elsewhere, in greater detail.

Mr. SAHRAOUI (Observer for Algeria) said, with regard to paragraph 185 of the report, that the large sums expanded on refugee assistance in Algeria were a sign of the importance of UNHCR activities in that country. Paragraph 188, concerning registration of potential voters in the Western Sahara, indicated the willingness of the two parties concerned to cooperate on all levels. Moreover, despite the obstacles mentioned in that paragraph, preliminary voter registration had taken place. However, subsequent events might make the paragraph appear somewhat outdated. The voting process had been blocked by Morocco's refusal to accept representatives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as observers because OAU had admitted the

(Mr. Sahraoui, Algeria)

"Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic" as a member, as explained in paragraphs 28 to 31 of document S/1994/819. UNHCR was closely following the situation and was ready to revise its plans and budget for repatriation in the Western Sahara when that became possible.

Mr. GULEV (Ukraine) said that refugee problems were familiar to his country, which was a prime destination for persons fleeing ethnic conflicts in parts of the former Soviet Union. His Government had always provided assistance to refugees from armed conflicts in neighbouring States. His country was striving to overcome the legacy of pre-Soviet and Soviet social policy, which had been designed to alter the ethnic structure of the population irreversibly by such means as genocide directed against indigenous peoples, artificial famines and deportation of certain ethnic groups. His Government devoted particular attention to the rehabilitation of victims of such repression, the restoration of justice and assistance to returning deportees. The understanding and support of the Office and the international community were needed to help his country confront the problems and tensions attendant upon the return of deportees.

His delegation supported the efforts of UNHCR on behalf of displaced persons and hoped that the measures envisaged in the report on their behalf would yield positive results.

Mr. ZHOU Xikang (China) said that his delegation appreciated the work of UNHCR in aid to displaced persons and refugees, voluntary repatriation, and other refugee problems. It also valued the traditional contributors and non-governmental organizations for their assistance to refugees and, in particular, the efforts of developing countries that provided shelter to refugees despite their own economic difficulties. He hoped that the international community would continue to provide assistance to refugees in Asia, Africa and Latin America, rather than neglecting those victims because of more recent refugee situations elsewhere.

In offering assistance to refugees, UNHCR should obtain the agreement of the concerned countries, follow the Charter and principles of the United Nations and respect the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Ms. BIRGIN (Australia) said that her delegation supported the candidacies of the Russian Federation, India and Bangladesh for membership in the Executive Committee of UNHCR. The Russian Federation was already a party to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of

(Ms. Birgin, Australia)

Refugees, but despite their experience with refugee populations, neither India nor Bangladesh had signed those instruments. Australia wondered when it could expect them to do so.

Mr. SNOUSSI (Observer for Morocco), said, with regard to the remarks of the representative of Algeria, that paragraph 188 was in fact outdated. There was no question of an agreement with regard to the criteria for eligibility to vote in the referendum for self-determination of the people of the Western Sahara, and no reference was made to such an agreement in any other United Nations document.

Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) drew attention to paragraphs 111 to 113 of the report. Her delegation supported the candidacies of the Russian Federation, India and Bangladesh for membership in the Executive Committee of UNHCR.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that UNHCR carried out extremely important work throughout the world. The demands on it had risen sharply in recent years, as the situation in Rwanda demonstrated. However, the resources available to it for carrying out its immeasurably difficult tasks were not commensurate with the requirements. He appealed to the international community to increase resources substantially so that UNHCR would be able to meet the pressing needs of refugees.

His delegation endorses all the relevant proposals made by the representative of the Office at the preceding meeting, as well as those contained in document E/1994/41.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/1994/41).

It was so decided.

Mr. LEBEDEV (Russian Federation) introduced draft decision E/1994/L.19 on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh and India an his own delegation. Bearing in mind the pressing problems of refugees and the experience gained in addressing them, and desiring to increase their cooperation with UNHCR, the sponsors had declared their desire to become members of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The draft decision before the Council was similar to earlier texts on similar questions. If the General Assembly adopted the decision on the recommendation of the Council, the question of the election of Bangladesh,

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(Mr. Lebedev, Russian Federation)

India and his own country to the Executive Committee would be included in the agenda of the Council's next session. The sponsors hoped that the draft decision would be adopted by consensus.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.